

THE PSALMS

TRANSLATED WITH
TEXT-CRITICAL AND
EXEGETICAL NOTES

VOLUME I

A full length Commentary on the Psalms, designed both for the advanced student and the general reader, has long been recognised as the outstanding need in English biblical theology. The present book will more than fulfil expectations.

W. O. E. OESTERLEY, D.D.

THE PSALMS

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W. O. E. OESTERLEY
D.D., Litt.D.

VOL. I

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PREFATORY NOTE

It had been my hope that the following work might have been done in collaboration with my dear friend Dr. Theodore Robinson; but exacting duties in other directions prevented this. I am, however, indebted to him for having contributed twenty-two of the psalms to the Commentary, and four chapters in the Introduction, for which I express my sincere thanks.*

In dealing with the individual psalms in the Commentary the following procedure has been adopted: first an introductory section giving a short account of the nature and contents of the psalm. Then comes the translation; in this the endeavour is made to keep as closely as possible to the Hebrew, and to reproduce the metrical structure of the original. It is fully realized that the English rendering does not, at times, run smoothly; this is to be regretted, but in some cases it is extremely difficult to give a pleasing translation without paraphrasing. The text-critical notes which follow are, of course, meant for the Hebrew student. Indebtedness to various scholars is indicated when called for. Textual emendation is confessedly a difficult, and often controversial, task; but in a great number of cases it is unavoidable. The endeavour is here made to suggest emendations only where absolutely demanded. The exegetical notes which are then given are as brief as possible; but it is hoped that all essential matters have received attention. Divergent views are only incidentally mentioned, for to discuss these in every case would take up far too much space. The verse-numbering in these notes is that of the English Bible, but where that of the Hebrew Bible differs it is indicated. Finally, there is a short section on the religious teaching of the psalm in question. Here the object is merely to lay stress on the special religious theme, or themes, of the psalm, not to elaborate them, which would be inappropriate in a Commentary. In some cases this section is omitted in order to avoid unnecessary repetition.

The Commentary is written primarily for non-Hebraists; but the student of Hebrew may, it is hoped, find some help in the text-critical notes.

I must express my sincere thanks to Prof. S. H. Hooke for a number of valuable suggestions.

W. O. E. OESTERLEY.

* Pss. 55-60, 68, 73-84, 86, 88, 90; and Chaps. I, II, IV, V.

ABBREVIATIONS

G	= Septuagint.
GK	= Gesenius' <i>Hebrew Grammar</i> , ed. Kautzsch (Engl. transl. by Cowley, 1910).
MT	= Masoretic Text.
RV	= Revised Version.
S	= Syriac Version (Peshitta).
T	= Targum.
V	= Vulgate.
ZAW	= <i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i> .

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CHAPTER I

THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF THE PSALTER

IN the opening essay of *The Psalmists* (1933), the late Hugo Gressmann noted and deplored the fact that no one has yet attempted to write a history of Hebrew psalmody. He had apparently overlooked the work of Cheyne, written during the best period of that great, but eccentric, scholar. *The Origin of the Psalter* (1891) is an attempt to discover from the psalms themselves, how the book reached its present form, and the periods to which individual psalms and groups of psalms may be ascribed. Cheyne started from the latest date and worked backwards, and was strongly under the influence of a Maccabæan theory, but his work was, in many ways, of permanent value, and he did, at least, recognize that the Psalter had a long history.

It may be doubted whether we can profitably discuss the earlier stages of development in this field. Poetry and religion have always gone hand in hand. The spiritual exaltation with which man approaches the object of his worship, even on the lowest levels, tends to find expression in ordered and symmetrical language. The deeper *strata* of personality, from which alone true poetry can spring, are those to which the divine makes its appeal, and in which the divine most readily and surely finds its response. The earliest forms of ritual which we know give rise to poetry, or to something closely akin to poetry (the sacred dance, for example),¹ and some of the earliest poetry known to us, *e.g.*, the great Mesopotamian epics, had a definite place in the *cultus*.

We may, then, take it for granted that from the beginning Israelite ritual involved the use of sacred poems. It is even possible that really primitive snatches and fragments have survived and have been incorporated in the psalms as we now have them, though it is no longer possible even to attempt their identification. But we do, from time to time, meet with phrases and metaphors which carry us back to a much older stage in the religious thought of Israel than that to which the Psalter has been adapted.

It seems probable, then, that the Psalter was compiled for use in the *cultus*, and was intended to supply what was necessary for every form of worship (see further pp. 5 ff.). But men's ideas change as time passes. Their theological conceptions develop, and the forms of the

¹ Cp., *e.g.*, Oesterley, *The Sacred Dance* (1923).

cultus are modified. The final compilation of the Psalter undoubtedly comes from an age when the religion of Israel was fundamentally, and even aggressively, monotheistic. But there survive phrases which imply a polytheistic outlook; while Yahweh is the supreme God, and the only God to receive the highest honours, others are admitted as valid deities, though of lower rank and inferior quality. The position recalls the "kathenotheism" which appears in so many of the hymns of the Rigveda. In a few instances we have a rejection of sacrifice which would have been inconceivable except at a late stage of religious development, and even the belief in a true immortality may be found in one or two psalm-passages.

Many of the psalms themselves, then, have had a long history, in the course of which they have been modified to meet the changing needs of the *cultus* and of the national outlook on religion. No one supposes that such forms of ritual as the enthronement festival or the mimic wedding and death of the God at each New Year still survived when our Psalter was compiled, yet it seems undeniable that some of our psalms, in their original form, were related to these ceremonial occasions. We may even go so far as to suggest that some of the psalms once formed portions of great dramatic epics, such as those which are familiar to us from the *cultus* of Babylon and Ugarit. But it is only a knowledge of other religions which makes such a conjecture possible; the psalms themselves have been so altered as to fit them for a purer and simpler ritual.

A history of Hebrew psalmody along these lines, however, can never take us very far. We are on much surer ground when we observe that there must have been collections of psalms existing independently before the formation of our present book, and that these have been extensively used by the compilers. For the identification of these smaller and older books we have to rely on *criteria* of two kinds: (a) the evidence to be gathered from the text, (b) the titles prefixed to a large number of the poems in the book.

(a) The Psalter is now divided into five books, probably in imitation of the "five-fifths" of the Law: I, 1-41; II, 42-72; III, 73-89; IV, 90-106; V, 107-150. But it is clear that this division is late; there seems to be no ground, for instance, for drawing a line between Pss. 106 and 107. But we do find in Pss. 42-89 (Bks. II and III) one striking peculiarity. Except for the last six, they show a definite attempt to avoid the divine name *Yahweh*, the word *Elohim* being substituted, even where the God of Israel is in view. Thus we have in Ps. 43⁴ "O God, my God", in 51¹⁴ "O God, God of my salvation", in 63¹ "O God, thou art my God", where a proper name would have been more suitable than the general term, at least in the vocative. Further, we have parallels in different parts of the Psalter. Thus Pss. 14 and 53 are almost identical, but 14² has *Yahweh* where 53²

has *God (Elohim)*. So also in 14⁴ (= 53⁵), 14⁶ (cf. 53⁶), 14⁷ (= 53⁷); the name Yahweh does not occur in Ps. 53 at all. On the other hand, Ps. 108, which is a combination of Pss. 57⁷⁻¹¹ and 60⁸⁻¹¹, does not use the name Yahweh, a fact which must be taken into account in another connexion. It seems clear that Pss. 42-83 once formed an independent collection which has been transferred bodily to our present Psalter.

Further, we have in certain cases psalms which are grouped together by their subject-matter. Here we may mention the "Enthronement" psalms (on which see pp. 6 f.), the "Hallelujah" psalms (Pss. 111-114, 116-118, 135, 136, 146-150), which are among the latest in the Psalter, and the "Songs of Ascents" (Pss. 120-134) sung by pilgrims as they ascended Mount Zion for the great annual festivals. It is at least probable that these originally formed small collections, from which they have been transferred to the larger book; it will be noted that psalms of each type tend to stand together even in our present book.

(b) The titles of the psalms are discussed elsewhere; it is sufficient here to observe their bearing on the question of earlier collections. It has been supposed (*e.g.*, by Briggs) that a number of the words in the titles indicated earlier collections, *e.g.*, "Mikam", "Of the Choir-master", "Maskil", "Mizmôr", but in these cases it would appear that the evidence hardly justifies the conclusion, since these psalms are scattered throughout the book. But we do find that psalms whose titles include certain personal names tend to come together, and these may well have been taken from earlier collections. Thus nearly all the psalms in Bk. I (the exceptions are Pss. 1, 2, 33; 10 is a part of the same psalm as 9) include the term "David's" in the heading. It is difficult not to believe that these once formed a separate collection.

Again, at the close of Ps. 72 we have the remark: "The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended". The title ascribes Ps. 72 itself to Solomon, and Pss. 51-65, 68-70 bear the name of David at the head. Here, again, the facts suggest that we have a second Davidic collection, which included the word "prayer" in its general title. The other Davidic psalms are sporadic (86, 101, 103, 108-110, 122, 124, 131, 133, 138-145); some of these are included in the "Songs of Ascents" and others in the "Hallelujah" psalms. There is no reason why a psalm should not have appeared in more than one collection; in fact, the evidence shows that this almost certainly happened, but, except possibly in the case of the last group of eight psalms, it seems more probable that the name of David was added at a later time. Both parts of Ps. 108, of course, are taken from poems which already had the name of David at their head.

Two other names must be considered. The first of these is "Of the sons of Qorah", the reference being, apparently, to the guild of temple-singers mentioned in 1 Chron. 9^{19, 31}, 12⁶. There are eleven

of these, falling into two groups: Pss. 42-49 and 84, 85, 87, 88—it is easy to suppose that Ps. 86 was inserted between Pss. 85 and 87 by the final compiler. Here, again, we feel justified in assuming an earlier collection, which may once have contained many more psalms than those which have come down to us.

The same remark may apply to the other collection, that of “Asaph”; whether the name be understood as referring to the individual mentioned in 1 Chron. 16⁵ and elsewhere, or whether it stands for “the sons of Asaph”, a guild of singers alluded to in 2 Chron. 29¹³, etc., is not a matter of importance. Eleven of these stand together (Pss. 73-83), and a twelfth appears in Ps. 50. Again, we may well understand that a single transposition may have been made by the final compiler of the Psalter, and we may conclude that these twelve also were taken from a separate collection.

While, then, the evidence is somewhat scanty, it is sufficient to justify us in the belief that our present Psalter was compiled from earlier collections. The earliest may well have been the first Davidic group, now practically forming Bk. I. The second large collection, which we may call “Elohistic”, had as its main sources three such collections, one bearing the name of the “Sons of Qorah”, one that of “Asaph”, and one the title “The Prayers of David”. The third main group was brought together after the completion of the second, as the evidence of Ps. 108 shows, and included the “Songs of Ascents”, the “Hallelujah” psalms, and, possibly, a section from a third Davidic collection. We have every reason to be thankful for the care and spiritual insight of the men who preserved for us these specimens of the sacred poetry of Israel.

CHAPTER II

THE CLASSIFICATION OF THE PSALMS

THE higher criticism of the Psalter has undergone a complete revolution in the last quarter of a century. The older effort was concentrated on authorship, and sought to know the circumstances which gave rise to each particular psalm. This tendency is reflected in the titles of many of our psalms, whose bearing is discussed elsewhere. Over a century ago it became clear that this method of approach could yield no reliable conclusions, and it was gradually abandoned, though even to-day a number of commentators still identify some of the psalms as the work of David. But the identity of the author was felt to be subordinate to the age which produced the poem, and from the time of Ewald onwards it has been customary to assign individual psalms to various periods in the history of Israel.

The newer criticism, while not oblivious of the possibility of suggesting a rough date for many of the psalms, has concentrated on their function—that is, on the part they were designed to play in the life of Israel. Naturally, they were designed for worship, and that meant for worship in the temple. The use of religious poetry for private meditation and prayer is a comparatively modern phenomenon, and we may take it for granted that, with few exceptions, the psalms were designed for use in one form or other of the *cultus*. It should, however, be pointed out that the use of psalms by an individual is not excluded; on the contrary, a good deal of the ritual was private, though performed in the temple. A vow was made by an individual, and he spoke in his own name, and in that of no other, when he went through the various forms of service which were connected with the fulfilment of his promise. There seems to have been no general or communal act of worship in the presentation of tithes; each man brought his own basket of produce, as was convenient for himself, and offered it as a personal gift. A great deal of judicial work was done in the temple, which was the supreme court of appeal in all cases. We may be certain that litigants, in stating their case and in receiving judgement, had prescribed forms of words to repeat, and each case implied a ritual and ceremonial procedure. Some of the psalms look like oaths of purgation, and our evidence shows us that an oath of this kind was often employed to settle a dispute. It is true that national psalms, designed for use by a representative of the whole people in time of crisis, might use the first person singular. The

concept of corporate personality made this possible, indeed, almost inevitable. But we can generally see fairly well whether the worshipper is speaking for himself alone, or whether his "I" is the whole group which he, for the time, represents.

The leading exponent of the newer method in psalm-criticism is Gunkel, though others, notably Gressmann, Mowinckel, and Hans Schmidt, have made important contributions. It will be well to sketch here in outline the position as the first-named scholar states it. He finds the following "types" or "classes" (*Gattungen*):

1. Hymns, or songs of praise; a special class is formed by the "Enthronement" psalms.
2. Laments of the community.
3. Royal psalms.
4. Laments of the individual.
5. Thanksgiving of the individual.

To these larger groups several smaller classes have to be added:

6. Blessings and curses.
7. Pilgrim psalms.
8. Thanksgiving of the Israelite nation.
9. Legends.
10. Psalms dealing with the Law.
11. Prophetic psalms.
12. Wisdom psalms.

A number of psalms are "mixed" in type, and may be assigned to more than one class. Sometimes a single psalm contains a veritable "liturgy" in which several classes alternate with one another.

Every "class" has its own special forms, with a characteristic introduction and conclusion. Thus the Hymns always begin with an introduction in which the singer says that he is about to praise Yahweh, or calls on others to do so. Then follows the reason; sometimes it is because of the mighty deeds that have been wrought in the past, through creation or history, and sometimes it is because of some more recent event. Among many others, Pss. 113, 117, and 135 are cited as examples. Ps. 103 is another which many serve as typical of this class; here the psalmist addresses his own "soul", and calls for a blessing on Yahweh. The reasons are given first in a series of sentences introduced by a participle with the article, equivalent to a relative clause. Further statements as to Yahweh's great and loving acts follow, and the psalm closes with a repetition of the call to praise, though this time the address is much wider, and includes angels as well as men.

"Enthronement" psalms, which, as we have seen, Gunkel regards as a special class of Hymns, are characterized by the opening formula

"Yahweh is King!" (or "Yahweh is become King!"). To this group belong such psalms as 93, 97, and 99. They suggest a ceremonial procession, following on the great acts of enthronement, anointing, and coronation, and may include elements derived from the ritual pattern already mentioned. Gunkel himself regarded these psalms as being eschatological, a view which is discussed elsewhere (see pp. 51 f.).

"Laments of the Community" were especially adapted for use in the ritual of fast-days. Typical of this class are Pss. 44, 74, and 80. They begin with a plea for a hearing, or with bewildered wonder as to why calamity has fallen on the people. Sometimes, as in Ps. 44, this is omitted, and the psalmist passes directly to a recollection of the great deeds done by Yahweh in the past, a normal element in such a psalm. There is, naturally, some description of the calamity which has led to the great day of humiliation and prayer. Its terms are usually vague, since it has to be employed on a variety of occasions, a fact which creates serious problems for commentators who still wish to assign a specific event to every psalm. Sometimes, it is true, the references are sufficiently detailed to make reasonable conjecture possible, but even then there is usually room for more than one explanation. As a rule, such psalms end, or at least include, an expression of confidence in the saving power of Yahweh and of the conviction that the prayer will be answered as the worshipper desires.

"Royal" psalms are not to be confused with the "Enthronement" psalms. The latter are hymns which celebrate the reign of Yahweh; the former are prayers for the prosperity of an earthly monarch. The class includes such pieces as Pss. 18, 45, 72, and 110. It must be remembered that, to the mind of the Ancient East, the king was more than an individual: he was an epitome of the nation, and the prosperity of the whole community was in some way bound up with his success. So, in spite of the natural Israelite insistence on the humanity of the king, and on his essential equality with his subjects in the sight of God, the great events of his life were a matter of concern for the whole people, and might demand a special ritual. The occasions for which these psalms were employed may have varied; some appear to have been used at his coronation, others may have formed part of a special service performed on his birthday, one (Ps. 45) was designed for the royal marriage, while protection and success in battle are natural objects of prayer. Their tone is generally that of petition for the king's safety or for divine guidance in the duties of his government.

The "Laments of the Individual" form a fairly large class, and were probably adapted to a number of different occasions. Some of them imply that the worshipper is standing by the altar, and is about to offer a sacrifice which, he hopes, will induce Yahweh to deliver him from his troubles. Psalms of this class not infrequently include a small liturgy,

in the course of which a divine oracle is given, promising to the worshipper the satisfaction of his need, and enabling him to close with thanksgiving for the coming benefit. The words of the oracle sometimes have to be assumed, but the happy ending shows that they were used in the actual ritual. Illustrations may be seen in Pss. 7 and 56; Ps. 20 may be the latter part of such a psalm, giving only the divine oracle and the final expression of confidence. To this class belong also some of the so-called "penitential psalms".

The occasions for these psalms were varied. A large proportion, however, clearly imply that the singer is the object of attack from personal enemies, and, as Hans Schmidt has shown, some may have been prescribed for use in judicial process, in protest against false accusation and in assertion of innocence. Ps. 26 is a good illustration of this class, while in Ps. 142 the singer is actually in prison (cf. *v.* 7).

Gunkel includes about a dozen of the pieces in the Psalter under the head of "Thanksgiving of the Individual". Here, more clearly than anywhere else, a place can be found in the ritual, for such psalms are particularly adapted to the ritual for the thank-offering or for the fulfilment of a vow. Yet they tend to overlap other classes, and Gunkel himself includes Ps. 18, which has already been classed as a "Royal" psalm. Others mentioned by him are Pss. 30, 32, 41, and 138. They naturally recount the special occasion which has called for thanksgiving, and are sometimes so to be read as to allow an interval for the actual presentation of a sacrifice on the altar.

We need not follow Gunkel further into his account of the smaller groups. Enough has been said to indicate the main lines on which the newer criticism is proceeding. It is still in its infancy, and the fact that it finds comparatively little mention in the following pages is not due to neglect of its importance, but rather to the feeling that it must be still further developed and more securely based before it can be accepted as finally valid. Its great weakness, as Gunkel himself states it, lies in the somewhat rigid *formulae* which it presupposes. Psalms are not always as easy to classify as the theory appears to imply; Gunkel includes Ps. 23 among the "Psalms of Confidence", though he admits that it is not characteristic of its class. The "Psalms of Confidence" are a minor subdivision of the "Laments of the Individual", and any classification which brings Ps. 23, however remotely, under that head, needs some revision. But it must be freely admitted that the door has been opened on to a new line of study, and we may well hope that the years will bring us fresh light, not only on the Psalter itself, but also on the whole religious life of those for whose needs it was compiled.

CHAPTER III

THE TITLES OF THE PSALMS

ALTHOUGH the titles occurring at the head of most of the psalms formed no part of the text in its original form, some consideration of them is demanded, since there is reason to believe that in a number of cases, so far as the musical accompaniment was concerned, they reflect traditional usage. In this connexion we may refer to what is said under Ps. 150, where it will be seen that musical instruments mentioned in various psalms were of great antiquity, since the identical names occur on monuments dating back to the third millennium. Another reason for discussing these titles is that many of them indicate the collection to which the psalm in question belonged before being incorporated in the Psalter in its present form, a subject which is not without interest (see further p. 3).

It is only to be expected that differences of opinion should exist as to the meaning of some of the titles; to some of these we shall refer; but an exhaustive discussion of all the different views does not seem to be called for. It must be recognized that in some cases the meaning of a title is uncertain.

For facility of reference we shall take the psalms in the order in which they now stand. First, however, it is necessary to say a brief word about the title of the Psalter as a whole. In the Hebrew Bible the title is *Tehillim*, in a contracted form *Tillim*, and *Sepher* ("Book") *Tillim* (Aramaic *Tillin* ¹). The word comes from the root *HLL*, "to praise"; it therefore means "Praises" or "Hymns". This title is not an appropriate one, for a large number of the psalms are not hymns of praise. Judging from the note added at the conclusion of Ps. 72, "The Prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended", it would seem that at one time this part of the Psalter had the general title *Tephillôth*, "Prayers"; but if so, it was equally inappropriate, for not many of these psalms are in the nature of prayers, and one only, the seventeenth, is called "A Prayer". In the Septuagint the title differs slightly in the MSS, usually Βίβλος Ψαλμῶν or Ψαλμοί ("Book of Psalms", or "Psalms") occur, but in Cod. A. it is Ψαλτήριον, which means a "stringed instrument" (cp. "psaltery" in Ps. 33², 144⁹ and elsewhere), and then a "song" sung to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument, or instruments. The title Ψαλμοί is the plural of a word

¹ E. G. Hirsch, in the *Jewish Encycl.*, x, 241 b.

corresponding to the Hebrew *mizmôr*, on which see below. The Syriac and Latin Versions follow the Septuagint.

We shall now take the psalms in order and discuss the titles as they occur.

Ps. 1: this, together with thirty-three other psalms, has no title; they are known as "Orphan" psalms; the term is Talmudic (*Abodah Zara* 24 b).

Ps. 2: "Orphan."

Ps. 3: *A Psalm. David's. When he fled from the face of Absalom, his son.*

First, as to the term *Mizmôr*, "psalm", which occurs in the titles of fifty-seven psalms. It comes from the root *ZMR*, meaning to "pluck", *i.e.*, taking hold of the strings of an instrument with the fingers, and thus implies that the psalms in question were sung to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument, or instruments. *David's* raises the question as to how we are to understand the prefix *lamed* (*L'*) which occurs so frequently, in different connexions, in the titles. It is the Hebrew preposition meaning "to", "belonging to", "of", "for"; it has also other shades of meaning according to the context. The traditional explanation is that this *L'* denotes authorship, hence the expression *lamed auctoris*. This cannot, however, always be its meaning because it occurs, *e.g.*, in connexion with "the sons of Qorah". Briggs denies that it refers to authorship; he says: "The earliest collection of psalms for use in the synagogue was made under the name of David, the traditional father of religious poetry and of the temple worship. The later editors left this name in the titles, with the preposition *L'* attached, to indicate that these psalms belonged to that collection." There may be something in this. In any case, it is difficult to understand why the name of David became attached to some quite late psalms. It occurs in the titles of seventy-three psalms; and in the Septuagint in fourteen others. In our rendering we have put "David's" in the titles in question, for we realize the difficulty of coming to a definite conclusion on the matter; and this can be taken either in the sense of Davidic authorship, or in that of belonging to the Davidic collection. The remainder of the title under consideration, referring to an episode in the life of David (see 2 Sam. 15), is due to an editor who believed to discern in the psalm a reference to this, see especially *v.* 6, or who felt that it might appropriately have been composed, or used, by David on this occasion.

Ps. 4: *For the Precentor: With stringed instruments. A Psalm. David's.*

The term "For the Precentor" (*Lamazeah*), which occurs here for the first time (it appears fifty-five times in the titles), is again one which is differently interpreted. It comes from the root meaning lit. "to

shine", and from the form of the verb which implies intensity; as the word is a participle, it must refer to an individual, thus, one who shines, *i.e.*, who is pre-eminent, and therefore occupying a leading position. This is supported by the use of the verb in 1 Chron. 15²¹, where it means "leading" the stringed instruments in the liturgical service of song. In most of the titles in which the term occurs musical directions of some kind are added, so that the rendering "Precentor" seems justified. At the same time, it must be recognized that the term was not so understood by the ancient translators. Briggs thinks that there was "a Psalter collected under the name of the Director, or choir-master", and that the psalms with this title "were taken from a Psalter bearing the Director's name". There is, however, nothing to show that such a Psalter ever existed. Another view is put forward by Haupt, and tentatively followed by Gunkel; by a change in the vowel-points he reads the word as *Laminzah*, which would mean "in regard to the musical rendering". There is a great deal in this view; the difficulty in regard to it, however, is that the use of the term is, relatively, so restricted; it does not occur in the great majority of the titles. This difficulty applies also, of course, to the rendering "For the Precentor", excepting that, as we have seen, there is more support for this. Once more, Mowinckel, taking the word in its literal sense, explains it as a liturgical abbreviation of the expression "to cause the face of Yahweh to shine", an antique anthropomorphic expression meaning to induce him to be favourably disposed (cp. Exod. 32¹¹); so that, according to this interpretation, the psalm was to be a means of propitiating God by sacred song and instrumental music. Its comparative rarity tells more against this view than against the others mentioned; if some psalms were a means of propitiation, why not all? But apart from this, the verb is never used in this sense either in Biblical or later Hebrew. We have drawn attention to these views both because of their interest, and because they are accepted, respectively, by different scholars; but we have retained the rendering "For the Precentor" (*i.e.*, instructions for the Precentor) as open to the least objection, and as having definite Biblical support in its favour. In the title under consideration there is, further, the instruction "with stringed instruments" (*bin'gînôth*), meaning that the singing of the psalm is to be accompanied by these (for details see under Ps. 150); the direction occurs in six other titles.

Ps. 5: For the Precentor. To the Nehilôth. A Psalm. David's.

What is meant by "To the Nehilôth" is a problem difficult of solution, if indeed it can be solved. It has been interpreted as meaning "to (the accompaniment) of Flutes"; this interpretation is justified in so far that we know from Isa. 30²⁹ that the flute was used in liturgical worship (see also 1 Kgs. 1⁴⁰); a usage occurring among other Semites too (see under Ps. 150). On the other hand, although the word in the

title looks as though it were derived from the root meaning "to pipe", the noun *nehilāh* does not occur elsewhere in the Bible; the ordinary word for "flute" is *ḥalīl* (lit. "reed-pipe"); so that if flutes were meant in the title, the word ought to be *Baḥālīlīm*. The interpretation mentioned above can, therefore, hardly be correct. In the Septuagint the term is rendered ὑπὲρ τῆς κληρονομούσης, and Jerome renders this *pro hereditibus*; they, therefore, read *N'ḥalōth*; the meaning would then be: "To (the tune of) the Inheritances", i.e., the psalm was to be sung to the melody of the well-known song, based (if the supposition is not too fanciful) on Isa. 49⁸, which ends with: "to make (them) inherit the desolate heritages" (*l'hanḥil n'ḥalōth šomēmōth*). There are other cases, to which reference will be made, of psalms being sung to the tunes of well-known songs.

Ps. 6: For the Precentor: With stringed instruments. On the eighth. A Psalm. David's.

The only term which demands consideration here is: "On the eighth" (*al-haššinīth*, or "According to the eighth"). The rendering "On the octave" ignores the fact that the Hebrews had no eight-toned scale. All authorities are agreed that the ancient music of the Hebrews was similar in style to that of the *primitive* type of Arab music, which may still be heard in parts of Arabia; in this, quarter-tones as well as semitones are recognized; it follows that they have no octave consisting of eight tones and thirteen semitones; and this must be presumed of ancient Hebrew music. There can, then, be no doubt that this term cannot mean "On the octave", i.e., that the musical instruments (cp. 1 Chron. 15²¹) were to be played, or that the male voices were to sing, an octave lower, as has been maintained. Hence some commentators explain the term as the eighth (psalm) of a collection, meaning, presumably, that the psalm was to be sung to the tune of that of the eighth in the collection. This is ingenious, but not very convincing; for one might reasonably expect references to the number of various other psalms in other collections in such a large body of psalms as those contained in the Psalter. The term occurs in the title of Ps. 12; but nowhere else is there any reference to a number in the titles. What is meant by the term remains an enigma; the Septuagint merely reproduces the Hebrew. See further on the title of Ps. 46.

Ps. 7: Šiggaion. David's, which he sang to Yahweh because of the words of Kush the Benjamite.

The term *Šiggaion* is traditionally interpreted as a noun derived from the root meaning "to go astray", or "to meander" (*ŠGH*); the psalm being thus described as of a wild character, dithyrambic. The contents of the psalm do not, however, bear this out. It can hardly be doubted that the word is a corruption, perhaps of *Higgaion* (see below); the Septuagint evidently read *Mizmôr*. In the title of the psalm in

Hab. 3, where the plural of the word occurs (*Šigiónóth*), the Septuagint again read *Mizmór* (cp. *Psalms of Solomon* 15¹). The episode in the life of David referred to in the title is difficult to identify; if, with the Versions, we read "Kushite", the reference may be to 2 Sam. 18³¹⁻³³; but the Kushite there is not a Benjamite; possibly he was mistakenly identified with the "Benjamite" of 2 Sam. 16¹¹.

Ps. 8: For the Precentor. On the Gittith. A Psalm. David's.

"*On the Gittith*" is sometimes held to refer to some musical instrument which took its name from Gath, the Philistine city. In the Targum this is the explanation, and is suggested by the fact that the form "*Gittith*" is equivalent to "Gath-like". There is, however, no reason to suppose that the Israelites ever borrowed an instrument from the Philistines. A far more likely explanation is that suggested by the Septuagint rendering, "For the wine-presses"; for the Hebrew word for "wine-press" is *gath*, and if, following the Septuagint, we read the plural *Gittóth* for *Gittith*, the term would mean that the psalm is described as one that was sung to the melody of a vintage-song, sung when the grapes were trodden out. The joyous character of the psalm bears this out, and it is worth noting that the same term occurs in the titles of Pss. 81, 84, the former of which was one of the proper psalms for the Feast of Tabernacles, the autumn feast, the time of the vintage. In the *Midrash* on the *Psalms*, moreover, in dealing with this title reference is made to Joel 3¹³ (Hebr. 4¹³), where it is said: "Put ye in the sickle, for the vintage is ripe; come, tread ye, for the wine-press (*gath*) is full, the fats overflow". Gunkel explains the term as in reference to a "Gathite" mode; but there is no evidence to show that the Israelites adopted a Philistine mode of singing (if there was one?) in their temple-worship.

Ps. 9: For the Precentor. 'Almúth labbēn. A Psalm. David's.

The words '*Almúth labbēn*', "According to (the melody of) 'Die for the son' (or 'The Death of the son')," may mean that this was the title of a song to the melody of which the psalm was to be sung. It is possible, however, that we have here a word which has suffered corruption, and that we should read '*Al-alamóth*', on which see the title to Ps. 46. The Versions give no help. At the end of v. 16 of the psalm the term *Higgaion* occurs; it comes from the root (*HGH*) meaning "to muse", or "meditate"; but, judging from its use in Ps. 92³, it must refer to music in connexion with a stringed instrument. Here, therefore, it probably means that the musical accompaniment is to be played by stringed instruments, lyres or harps.

Pss. 10-15: Terms already dealt with.

Ps. 16: Miktam. David's.

The term *Miktam* occurs also in the titles of Pss. 56-60. Its meaning is uncertain. In Rabbinical writings it is connected with the word

Kethem, "gold", and is explained as "a golden piece", beautiful and valuable. Another word with which it might be connected is *Katham*, something "hidden"; in this case the term would mean that the psalm was of hidden import, not understood by all. It may well be, however, that Mowinckel has hit upon the true meaning; he connects the term with the Assyrian *Katamu* "to cover", *i.e.*, to cover sin; so that *Miktam* would be employed in reference to a psalm which dealt with the subject of covering, or atoning for, sin, or uncleanness, or else sickness, the result of sin; it might even have been held that the saying or singing of the psalm was of atoning efficacy.

Ps. 17: A Prayer. David's.

The contents of this psalm show the appropriateness of its being called a *Tephillah*, "prayer". Only one other psalm (86) is so called; and the word occurs in the titles of 90, 102, 142; see also the note appended at the end of 72, "The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended".

Ps. 18: For the Precentor: David's, the servant of Yahweh; who spake unto Yahweh the words of this song in the day that Yahweh delivered him from the grasp of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul; and he said.

The reference here is to 2 Sam. 7¹³⁻¹⁶.

The content of this psalm shows that, at any rate in its present form, Davidic authorship is out of the question; for details see the Commentary.

The only term to be considered here is *Širah* "song"; it occurs nowhere else in the titles; but its commoner form *Šir* is often used. We shall deal with it under Ps. 30. The rest of the title, with slight variations, is as in 2 Sam. 22¹, where Ps. 18 appears again.

Pss. 19-21: Terms already dealt with.

Ps. 22: For the Precentor: According to "The Hind of the Dawn". A Psalm. David's.

Here we have, in all probability, the name of a well-known song to the tune of which this psalm was to be sung.

Pss. 23-29: Terms already dealt with.

Ps. 30: A Psalm. A Song for the Dedication of the House. David's.

The term *Šir*, "song", occurs here for the first time in the titles. It is the most ancient word employed in reference to a poem, whether sacred or secular. As a rule, in the titles, it stands alone, like *Mizmôr* (in twelve titles); here, as in Pss. 45, 120-134, it is connected with some word, defining its nature more definitely. The mention of the "Dedication of the House", *i.e.*, the temple, cannot, of course, refer to any episode in the life of David. The obvious inference, at first sight, is that the words refer to the re-dedication of the temple by Judas Maccabæus after its desecration by Antiochus Epiphanes (see 1 Macc.

4⁵²⁻⁵⁰); that the psalm may have been used on this occasion is likely enough, and this was probably the reason why the words were added in the title; but that the psalm itself is Maccabæan is, of course, out of the question.

Ps. 31. Terms already dealt with.

Ps. 32. *David's. Maskil.*

As the root from which the term "Maskil" comes has a variety of meanings, according to the context, it is natural that it should be differently explained, especially as the contents of the psalms which have the term in their titles (thirteen) are of various character. Following the Septuagint rendering, the term is perhaps best understood as "instruction", the psalms in question being of an instructive kind. This, to be sure, would apply to many another psalm which is not called a "Maskil"; the term would, therefore, seem to have been employed somewhat arbitrarily.

Ps. 33: "Orphan".

Ps. 34: *David's; when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech, and he drove him away, and he went.*

This reference to the episode in the life of David is from 1 Sam. 21¹⁰⁻¹⁵, though the Philistine king there mentioned is Achish. There is nothing in the psalm which points to this occasion. Like the references to David in some of the other titles, it is due to the imagination of some editor.

Ps. 35: Term already dealt with.

Ps. 36: *For the Precentor: David's, the servant of Yahweh.*

For this designation of David see 1 Sam. 23^{10, 11}. The title was probably suggested by v. 10.

Ps. 37: Term already dealt with.

Ps. 38: *Mizmôr. David's. To bring to remembrance (l'hazkîr).*

The term *l'hazkîr* is probably a corruption of *l'azkarah* (Lev. 24⁷); this was the "memorial offering", used in connexion with the *Minḥah*, "meal offering" (see Lev. 21¹⁻³). Its mention in the title will, therefore, mean that this psalm was sung while the "memorial offering" was being burned. The term occurs again in the title of Ps. 70.

Ps. 39: *For the Precentor: Jeduthun's. A Psalm. David's.*

"Jeduthun", or "Jedithun", according to the Versions, was the name of a founder of a guild of temple-singers, but the name is also applied to the guild itself (1 Chron. 16⁴¹, and 1 Chron. 25^{1, 3}, and elsewhere). The name in the title probably refers to the mode of singing adopted by this guild, and that the psalm was to be sung after this mode.

Pss. 40, 41: Terms already dealt with.

Ps. 42: *For the Precentor: Maskil. Belonging to the sons of Qorah.*

The "Sons of Qorah" were a guild of temple-singers, Levites

(1 Chron. 9^{19, 31, 12⁶}). The psalms which have "Of", or "Belonging to, the Sons of Qorah", twelve in number, were presumably taken from a collection in possession of this guild.

Pss. 43, 44: Terms already dealt with.

Ps. 45: *For the Precentor: To "Lilies". Belonging to the Sons of Qorah. Maskil. A Song of Loves.*

"Šošan̄im", usually translated "Lilies", means, properly speaking, "Anemones". The reference is again to the name of some favourite song, to the tune of which this psalm was to be sung. "A Song of Loves" is a very appropriate name for the psalm, as its contents show. In the *Song of Songs* anemones are often referred to in connexion with a lover. See further the titles to Pss. 60, 80.

Ps. 46: *For the Precentor: Belonging to the Sons of Qorah. According to 'Alamôth. A Song.*

"'Alamôth" means "young women"; in 1 Chron. 15¹⁷⁻²¹ we read that among the singers and players appointed by the Levites were some who played "with harps (*nebel*) set to 'Alamôth", and others who played "with lyres (*kinnôr*) set to the *šeminîth*, to lead". Some commentators explain these, respectively, as in reference to women's voices, and to men's voices, an octave lower; or else, since women took no part in the service of song, to men's falsetto voices. Against this it must be urged that, as we have already seen, the Hebrews had no eight-toned scale; and if falsetto voices were meant, the comparison would not be to women's voices, but to boys' voices. Moreover, the expressions in question are used in connexion with harps and lyres, therefore with instrumental, not vocal, music. As the *kinnôr* was the smaller of these two stringed instruments, the term "*šeminîth*" might conceivably refer to its eight strings; Josephus says that the larger *nebel* had twelve strings (*Antiq.* vii. 306); but this does not explain the term "'Alamôth", which, we must confess, we do not understand.

Pss. 47-49: Terms already dealt with.

Ps. 50: *A Psalm. Asaph's.*

In 1 Chron. 6^{24 (39)}, Asaph is mentioned as one of the leaders of the Levitical choir (cp. 1 Chron. 15¹⁷, 2 Chron. 29³⁰, where he is spoken of as a "seer"). As "the Sons of Asaph" formed one of the guilds of temple-singers, the question is whether "Asaph's" here, and in the titles of Pss. 73-83, is an abbreviation for "the Sons of Asaph", who possessed a collection of psalms, or whether he was personally the author of this psalm; as Asaph was a "seer", it is quite possible that the latter was the case.

Ps. 51: *For the Precentor: A Psalm. David's; when the prophet Nathan came unto him after he had gone in unto Bath-sheba.*

For the reference here to the episode in the life of David, see

2 Sam. 11, 12; the penitential content of the psalm suggested the title to some editor, for Davidic authorship is out of the question (see the intr. section to this psalm in the Commentary).

Ps. 52: Terms already dealt with.

Ps. 53: For the Precentor: 'Al-Maḥalath. Maskil. David's.

The meaning of "Al-Maḥalath" is very uncertain; the word may come from a root meaning "sickness"; hence some commentators think that the psalm was meant to be sung during sickness; or that it was the title of a song, to the tune of which the psalm was to be sung; or, reading "Al-Maḥalatīth", that it was to be sung to the mode of Maḥalath, the wife of Esau (Gen. 28⁹); or else, reading "Al-Meḥolatīth", in reference to the city of Abel-Meḥolah (Judg. 7²², 1 Sam. 18¹⁹). With the exception of the first, none of these strike us as likely to be the true meaning (see the title to Ps. 88). Perhaps the Septuagint is to be followed, where it is written Maeleth, and taken to be a proper name, conceivably a corruption of Maḥli or Maḥali, one of the Levites "who did the work for the service of the house of Yahweh" (1 Chron. 23^{23, 24}).

Pss. 54, 55: Terms already dealt with.

Ps. 56: For the Precentor: To "The Dove of the far-off terebinths." David's. Miktam. When the Philistines took him in Gath.

Here we have again the title of a well-known song: "The Dove of the far-off terebinths", to the tune of which the psalm was to be sung. The reference to David in Gath is inexact, for neither in 1 Sam. 21^{10, 11}, nor in 27¹⁻⁴, is he taken by the Philistines; he went to Gath of his own free will.

Ps. 57: For the Precentor: To "Destroy it not". David's Miktam. When he fled from the face of Saul into the cave.

"Al-tashḥeth", meaning "Destroy it not", was evidently taken from the opening of a popular vintage-song, to the tune of which the psalm was to be sung (so, too, in the titles of Pss. 58, 59, 75). The song is quoted in Isa. 65⁸: ". . . As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, 'Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it' . . ." For the reference to David see either 1 Sam. 22¹, the cave of Adullam, or 24^{1a}, the cave of Engedi.

Ps. 58: Terms already dealt with.

Ps. 59: The terms are as in the title of Ps. 57; they are followed by: When Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him.

The reference is to 1 Sam. 19¹¹.

Ps. 60: For the Precentor: To "The Lily of Witness". Miktam. David's. To teach. When he strove with 'Aram-naharaim and with 'Aram-Zobah; and Joab returned and slew Edom in the Valley of Salt, twelve thousand men.

Šušān 'Edûth. "The Lily [better Anemone] of Witness" is

probably the name of the song referred to in the titles of Pss. 45, 69, 80. "To teach" (cp. 2 Sam. 1¹⁸) suggests that the psalm was taught to young warriors, as it is of a distinctly war-like character. For the rest of the title see 2 Sam. 8^{3a}, 13-14.

Pss. 61, 62 : Terms already dealt with.

Ps. 63 : *A Psalm. David's. When he was in the wilderness of Judah.*

For the reference to the episode in the life of David, see 1 Sam. 24⁴, since Engedi was in the south of Judah ; the phrase " the wilderness of Judah " occurs elsewhere only in Judg. 1¹⁸.

Pss. 64-70 : Terms already dealt with.

Ps. 71 : "*Orphan*".

Ps. 72 : *Solomon's.*

The contents of this psalm fully account for its ascription to Solomon ; but that he was the writer is out of the question ; see the exegetical notes to the psalm in the Commentary.

Pss. 73-87 : Terms already dealt with.

Ps. 88 : *A Song. A Psalm. Belonging to the Sons of Qorah. For the Precentor : 'Al-Maḥalath, L'e'annôth. Maskil of Heman the Ezrahite.*

It is evident that at least two titles have become mixed up together here. Probably the original title began with " For the Precentor ". For " 'Al-Maḥalath " see the title of Ps. 53. Very uncertain as the meaning of this is, the contents of this psalm support the meaning " For sickness ", i.e., a psalm to be sung by one suffering sickness. The word " L'e'annôth " means " to afflict ", and is probably to be connected with the preceding. Heman (he is not called " the Ezrahite " elsewhere) was the name of one of David's singers (1 Chron. 15^{17, 19, 25}), and also that of one of Solomon's wise men (1 Kgs. 4³¹, Hebr. 5¹¹) ; he is mentioned together with Ethan the Ezrahite, who was likewise a wise man and a singer ; but there may well have been two Hemans and two Ethans.

Ps. 89 : *Maskil of Ethan the Ezrathite.*

See the foregoing.

Ps. 90 : *A Prayer of Moses, the man of God.*

Of this title it can only be said that it illustrates the unreliability of the titles when they deal with authorship. It is different when musical directions are in question.

Ps. 91 : "*Orphan*".

Ps. 92 : *A Psalm. A Song for the Sabbath Day.*

The title does not necessarily mean that the psalm was originally composed for singing on the Sabbath, but rather that it was chosen for this day. It has been used as one of the special psalms for the Sabbath by the Jewish Church up to the present day.

Pss. 93-97 : "*Orphan*".

Ps. 98 : Term already dealt with.

Ps. 99 : "*Orphan*".

Ps. 100 : *Mizmôr*. *For thanksgiving*.

This title indicates that the psalm was sung during the offering of the "Tôdah" ("Thanksgiving"), which belonged to the type of sacrifices known as the "Peace offerings" (*Šelamim*), see Lev. 7¹¹⁻¹⁵, Am. 4⁵.

Ps. 101 : Terms already dealt with.

Ps. 102 : *A Prayer for an afflicted one when he becometh faint, and poureth out his complaint before Yahweh*.

This title explains itself, and the contents of the psalm show its appropriateness.

Ps. 103 : Term already dealt with.

Pss. 104, 105 : "*Orphan*".

Ps. 106 : The "*Hallelujah*" which stands as a title to this psalm has been repeated from the conclusion of the previous psalm ; it is omitted by a number of MSS. The psalm is an "*Orphan*" one.

Ps. 107 : "*Orphan*".

Pss. 108-110 : Terms already dealt with.

Pss. 111-113 : In these psalms "*Hallelujah*" stands as a title.

Pss. 114-119 : "*Orphan*".

Pss. 120-134 : "Songs of Ascents" ; Pss. 122, 124, 131, 133 add "David's", omitted, however, by some MSS ; Ps. 127 adds "Solomon's". For a discussion on what is meant by this term, see the introductory section to Ps. 120 in the Commentary.

Ps. 135 : "*Hallelujah*" again stands as the title.

Pss. 136, 137 : "*Orphan*".

Pss. 138-141 : Terms already dealt with.

Ps. 142 : *Maskil*. *David's, when he was in the cave*. *A Prayer*.

See the title to Ps. 57. The title was probably suggested by what is said in v. 7, "Bring my soul out of prison".

Pss. 143, 144 : Terms already dealt with.

Ps. 145 : *Praise*. *David's*.

This is the only occurrence in the titles of the term "T^hillah", meaning "Praise". The contents of the psalm show it to be very fitting. The addition of "David's" illustrates the haphazard way in which the name has been made use of in the titles.

Pss. 146-150 : All these psalms have the heading "*Hallelujah*" ; in most cases it is in the nature of a title, but in Ps. 147 it belongs to the text itself.

CHAPTER IV

THE FORMS OF HEBREW POETRY ¹

FOR many centuries it was believed that there was no distinction to be made in form between Hebrew prose and Hebrew poetry. The language itself, owing to the great strength of its accentuation, is so wonderfully musical that even its prose has a poetic quality and ring. In the early Christian centuries, it is true, some scholars (*e.g.*, Philo and Josephus among Jews, and Origen and Jerome among Christians) claimed that metres similar to those of Greek poetry were used in Hebrew, but their statements are usually attributed to a desire to glorify the Scriptures from every point of view. Origen, indeed, apparently had some idea of the true nature of Hebrew poetic form, but he does not seem to have applied his theories regularly, and was not followed. It was only in the eighteenth century that the world of Hebrew scholarship first had any light on the subject.

The pioneer in this work was Robert Lowth, whose lectures on Hebrew poetry were published in 1753 under the title *De Sacra Poesi Hebræorum Prælectiones Academicæ*. He observed that every line of Hebrew poetry is divided into at least two parts, of which the second frequently repeats the thought of the first. This he called *parallelism of verse-members*; for the mind of the writer, instead of proceeding in a continuous line, as a prose-author would do, goes back, and moves along a line parallel to its former course. Lowth distinguished between three types of parallelism:

(a) *Synonymous*, in which the same thought is repeated with some exactness, *e.g.*, Ps. 83¹⁴:

*As when fire kindleth in the forest,
as when flame blazeth on the hills.*

(b) *Antithetic*, involving a contrast, and sometimes expressing the same idea first positively and then negatively, *e.g.*, Ps. 90⁶:

*At morn it doth blossom and burgeon,
at eve it doth droop and wither.*

or Prov. 27⁶:

*Faithful are the wounds of a friend,
but deceitful the kisses of an enemy.*

(c) *Synthetic*, where the sense runs on continuously, *e.g.*, Ps. 2⁶:

*And I have anointed my king
on Zion, my holy hill.*

¹ The rendering of some of the quotations given in this chapter differs from that appearing in the Commentary, but the *sense* is mostly the same.—T. H. R.

It is, we may at once remark, generally recognized that this last type is not true parallelism in thought, though each member of the line has the same number of significant words in Hebrew. A much better name for this type of line is that used by Gray, *formal parallelism*.

It is very seldom that two members of a line correspond exactly, and there are numerous modifications which deserve even more attention than they have yet received. Lowth fully recognized the facts, and did something to classify variations. His fundamental principles have never been challenged (though they have sometimes been neglected), and still remain the basis of all sound study of Hebrew poetic form.

For a century and a half little advance was made on Lowth. C. A. Briggs, in his commentary on the *Psalms* (1907), cites three more types of parallelism, identified by earlier scholars :

(d) *Emblematic*, e.g., Ps. 103¹³ :

*Like as a father pitieth his children,
so Yahweh pitieth them that fear him.*

(e) *Stair-like*, where a part of a member is repeated, and made the starting-point for fresh progress, e.g., Ps. 29⁵ :

*The voice of Yahweh breaketh the cedars,
Yahweh breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.*

(f) *Introverted*, which involves a series of lines in which the parallelism is chiasmic, the first and last being parallel, and the intervening lines corresponding with one another. Briggs cites, among other passages, Ps. 69⁹⁻¹¹ :

*Depart, ye workers of trouble, from me;
For he hath heard the voice of my weeping,
Yahweh hath heard my supplication,
Yahweh accepteth my prayer.
They will turn back, they will be put to shame in a moment.*

But the first real advance was made by Gray, in his *Forms of Hebrew Poetry* (1915). He distinguished two broad classes of parallelism : (a) complete, in which every word in one member was balanced by a word in the corresponding member ; (b) incomplete. The latter class, again, might have two forms. There might be in the second member an additional word "compensating" for the omission of a word in the first member, or the second member might be left without any compensation. We might have schemes like

a.	b.	c.	
a'.	b'.	c'.	(complete parallelism,
			cf. Ps. 83 ¹⁴ , cited above).
a.	b.	c.	
a'.	b'.	d.	E.g., Ps. 75 ⁶ :

*For not from east nor from west
Nor from wilderness cometh uplifting.*

A very common type of incomplete parallelism with compensation is the form

a. b. c.
b'. c'. d. E.g., Ps. 59¹⁸:

*But I will sing of thy might,
exult loudly in thy love at morn.*

Often in parallelism of this kind two terms in one member correspond to one term in the other: again more than one form may appear. We may have the scheme

a. b. c.
a'. b' + d. E.g., Ps. 57⁴:

*Their teeth are lance and arrows,
their tongue a sharp sword.*

Another common form is

a. b. c.
b'. c' + d. E.g., Ps. 90⁸:

*Thou hast set our iniquities before thee,
our secret sins in the light of thy face.*

Sometimes only one term in the first member is represented in the second, and there are two new terms giving a form

a. b. c.
c'. d. e. E.g., Ps. 81¹⁰:

*I am Yahweh thy God,
that brought thee up from the land of Egypt.*

But the different types of incomplete parallelism with compensation are too numerous for detailed description, and not a little of the formal beauty of Hebrew poetry depends on the variety shown in its use. We should, however, note that there are many cases in which each member has only two terms, and that here, too, similar principles apply. Thus we may have complete parallelism, with a scheme

a. b.
a'. b'. E.g., Ps. 29⁴:

*The voice of the Lord in strength,
the voice of the Lord in splendour.*

Much commoner is

a. b.
a'. c. E.g., Ps. 23⁴:

*Thy rod and thy staff,
they comfort me.*

But in the Psalter lines of two-term members are much more often

continuous in sense, giving what Lowth called synthetic parallelism. To this point we shall return later.

Incomplete parallelism without compensation normally results in two verse-members of uneven length. In these cases the second, which is usually the shorter, is often a kind of echo of the first. We may thus have a scheme

a. b. c.

a'. b'.

E.g., Ps. 57⁹:

*I will praise thee among the peoples, O Lord,
hymn thee among the nations.*

Or (a common type)

a. b. c.

b'. c'.

E.g., Ps. 57¹⁰

*For great unto the heavens is thy love,
and unto the skies thy truth.*

As an illustration of the form

a. b. c.

a'. c'.

we may take Ps. 84⁴:

*Yea, the sparrow hath found a house,
and the swallow her nest.*

Naturally the possibilities of variation are less numerous than they are in the longer lines, but, nevertheless, they have a fairly wide range.

So far we have been considering the parallelism of the members within a line. But we also frequently have parallelism which involves two or more whole consecutive lines. This we may distinguish as *external parallelism*. It is not common with the longer lines, and where it occurs in these it generally appears as a repetition of the general sense without exact correspondence of terms. But an example may be seen in Ps. 59¹⁻²:

*Deliver me from my foes, O my God ; from them that exalt themselves against
me protect me ;
Deliver me from workers of iniquity ; and from men of blood save me.*

Here we have an almost exact correspondence between the two complete lines, and we note that there is also internal parallelism, incomplete with compensation in the first line, but complete in the second. Sometimes two lines are linked by parallelism between the second member of the first and the first member of the second, e.g., in Ps. 78⁸ we have:

*And not become as their fathers, a generation perverse and defiant,
A generation that set not its heart, whose spirit was not faithful with God.*

This gives us a "stair-like" parallelism. But most commonly external parallelism is loose in the longer lines, and is merely a repetition of the same general idea. In the shorter lines, however, it is much more

frequent and exact, and in lines with two-term members it is usual, though not invariable. We may have the form which appears in Ps. 79⁹:

Help us, O God of our salvation, for thy glorious name's sake.
And deliver us and atone for our sins, for thy name's sake.

Here the internal parallelism (if we may so describe it at all) is "synthetic", while the external parallelism is clearly marked, though not exactly complete. In lines with two-term members, as has already been pointed out, this type of parallelism becomes normal. Thus we have almost exact correspondence between two successive lines in Ps. 74¹⁵:

Thou didst rend open fountain and wadi,
Thou didst dry up rivers of yore.

Such an arrangement has the appearance of four-member lines, but the parallelism in other parts of the poem shows that this interpretation of the phenomena is hardly justified, *e.g.*, the line following those just quoted runs:

Thine is the day, yea, thine the night ;

where the internal complete parallelism is obvious. A good instance of incomplete external parallelism, giving the "stair-like" arrangement, is to be seen in Ps. 29¹⁻²:

Give to Yahweh, ye sons of gods,
Give to Yahweh glory and strength,
Give to Yahweh the glory of his name.

We might represent this by the formula:

a. b. c. d.
a. b. e. f.
a. b. e. g.

It must be admitted that what has been said is but a superficial sketch of the subject. But the more we study the different forms and types that parallelism may take in Hebrew poetry, the more we are impressed by its variety and flexibility. The illustrations given above have all been taken from the Psalter; had we included references to other poetical works—*Job*, *Lamentations*, and the prophets in particular—we should have found our range increased and our conclusions reinforced. There is something to be said for the view that parallelism in thought is the basis of all forms of poetry, developing only later into that parallelism in sound which is now recognized as its most prominent characteristic. But a discussion of this aspect would take us too far afield, and we must be content to draw certain conclusions which, though sometimes neglected, seem to the present writer to be inevitable corollaries of the principle of parallelism.

The first of these is that the rhythm of Hebrew poetry is essentially

a rhythm of sense, and not of sound. It is the logical terms which balance one another, not the number, length, or stress of the syllables. Numerous attempts have been made to establish systems of Hebrew rhythm on a phonetic basis, and in dealing with a language like Hebrew this is only natural. But it must never be forgotten that the phonetic element is always secondary and the logical element primary. An exposition of the nature of Hebrew poetic form which concentrates on the former is foredoomed to failure, and it must be admitted that a great deal of time and strength has been spent by scholars in a futile quest. The analysis of the metrical unit carried out by men like Sievers (to take a conspicuous example) is of value in determining the musical character and qualities of the Hebrew language in general, but has little specific bearing on its prosody. We use terms like "accent", "beat", "stress", because we have no other convenient phraseology, but we must not forget the basic principle that the sound is but the expression of the thought, and that in Hebrew poetry it is the latter, and not the former, which creates and dominates the form. The strength of the accent in Hebrew naturally tends to link meaning and sound, summing up the whole content of an idea, as it does, in a heavily accented syllable at or near the end of the sound-group. The enumeration of significant terms will almost certainly coincide with that of the most strongly accented syllables, but it was the former, and not the latter, which determined the poetic structure.

From what has been said, it follows that the metrical unit and the logical unit must always coincide. The logical unit itself may be somewhat complex, and may embrace more than one "word". Two nouns standing in the construct relation may be regarded as a single entity by the poet, especially if the two form a familiar phrase. The word "all", for example, is rarely independent unless its meaning be reinforced with a conjunction; in Ps. 56¹ "every day" is a single concept and forms a single unit. The relative pronoun standing alone is seldom if ever treated as a metrical unit, though with a preposition it may attain independent status, and the same remark may be made of the shorter prepositions, though the longer forms, which still show clearly their nominal character, are more likely to stand alone, and a preposition with a pronominal suffix is nearly always a significant unit. If a negative counts in the verse-enumeration, it is because the poet laid an overwhelming stress upon it, *e.g.*, in Isa. 1³:

The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib ;
Israel doth NOT know ; my people doth NOT consider.

On the other hand, a single "word" may sometimes (though not often) have the metrical value of two units, if it be sufficiently charged with meaning. On the rare occasions when this phenomenon occurs,

the word is generally in the plural and has a suffix, a prefix, or both. Thus in Ps. 59¹ we have the term "from those that exalt themselves against me", which is a single word in Hebrew, but is clearly capable of bearing the weight of more than one sense-unit. It is, however, to be noted that such two-unit words never form whole verse-members by themselves; they are found only as supplying two terms in three-term verse-members.

When we pass from the single thought-unit to the larger verse-unit into which the thought-units are combined, we must observe the same principle that it is the logical element which dominates the whole. The verse-member and the full line alike have a logical basis, and each is a group of significant terms, with breaks in the rhythm corresponding to the breaks in the thought. As we have seen, every line consists of at least two members, with a greater or lesser pause between them; the name *cæsura* is commonly used to indicate this pause. Now, we cannot have, in Hebrew verse, a greater pause, or a stronger *cæsura*, within a verse-member than that which separates the verse-members of a line from one another. It may sometimes seem to us, on a superficial reading, that this rule is violated, but a closer examination of the facts and a fuller understanding of the poet's mental processes will show us that the first impression has been misleading. Such a line as Ps. 103⁶,

Yahweh worketh righteousness and judgement for all the oppressed,

may look at first sight as if "righteousness" and "judgement" were more closely connected than "worketh" and "righteousness" on the one hand, and "judgement" and "for all the oppressed" on the other. But as soon as we realize that the poet naturally thought in parallels, we see that the words "and judgement for all that are oppressed" take up and carry on the thought of "righteousness". In other words, the true arrangement is:

*Yahweh worketh righteousness,
and judgement for all the oppressed,*

and we have a case of incomplete parallelism with compensation, with the formula:

a. b. c.
 c'. d. e.

The Hebrew habit of making a pause before launching out on some emphatic expression will account for, and is illustrated by, a number of cases in which we should be inclined to put a *cæsura* in a place where it would not naturally fit the verse-scheme (see below on the 2 : 3 form). In fact, there are very few combinations of words which prohibit a division between them; perhaps the only type of connexion in which

we can be certain that no pause can be made is when two nouns stand in the construct relation, or (really a special case of this combination) when a preposition immediately precedes a noun.

It follows that in Hebrew poetry there can be no such thing as *enjambement*. While the thought and the syntax may run on from one line to the next, or from one verse-member to the next (as in "synthetic parallelism"), each unit has a certain self-consistency and independence of its neighbours. We may take such a series of lines as that which occurs in the Psalm just quoted, Ps. 103²² :

*Bless Yahweh, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits ;
Who forgiveth all thine iniquities,
who healeth all thy diseases ;
Who redeemeth thy life from the Pit,
who crowneth thee with love and tenderness. . . .*

Here the thought is in a sense continuous, and, syntactically, all the relative clauses in the second and third lines (in Hebrew they are all participles with the definite article) are dependent on the pronoun at the end of *v. 2*. But not only each separate line, but each separate verse-member, is self-contained, with a clear break in thought separating it both from what precedes and from what follows. Such an arrangement as Tennyson's :

*" Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell,
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight
And mock thee when we do not fear . . . "*

is utterly inconceivable in classical Hebrew poetry.

A further result of the principle of parallelism is that there can be no such thing as an isolated verse-member.¹ The very idea of parallelism connotes at least two members ; a single "parallel" line is as impossible in Hebrew metrics as it would be in mathematics. Some commentators (Briggs is an outstanding example) are in the habit of treating a three-term member as an independent unit. But even where a group of lines contains an odd number of verse-members, it will usually be found that in one or more places three members are best taken together. There can be no objection to a three-member unit on the score of parallelism, and this arrangement does at times occur regularly, *e.g.*, in Ps. 77¹⁶⁻¹⁹.

¹ It is only right to say at this point that Dr. Oesterley believes that a two-term member can exist as an independent line. It is true that Dussaud (*Les Découvertes de Ras Shamra et l'Ancien Testament*, pp. 66f. [1937]), and Schaeffer (*The Cuneiform Texts of Ras Shamra-Ugarit*, p. 58 [1939]), maintain that two-beat members occur in the Ras Shamra poems, though not often. After most careful consideration, however, I feel that the facts are capable of other explanations, and are not really at variance with the principle of parallelism.—T. H. R.

We may now proceed to consider the different types of line which are found in Hebrew poetry—in other words, the recognizable metres. It is usual to “scan” Hebrew poetry by enumerating the significant terms of each verse-member. The smallest combination of terms is, of course, a pair, and the simplest metre is the 2 : 2, *i.e.*, one in which each verse-member contains two terms. The lines cited above from Ps. 74¹⁵ belong to this class. But it is very rare as the only metre used in a Hebrew poem; it is comparatively seldom even the dominant rhythm. Examples, however, may be found in Pss. 29, 74. It is not uncommon in the prophetic books; a fine example occurs in the stirring account of the sack of Nineveh, Nah. 3¹⁻³. In this passage the parallelism is mainly internal, but as a rule, especially in the Psalter, the parallelism is external, and some scholars would even scan the metre as 4 : 4. The occasional appearance of a genuine 2 : 2, however, makes the assumption of a longer verse-member improbable.

Much more common than the 2 : 2 is a form in which one member, usually the first, is expanded by the addition of an extra term, giving either 3 : 2 or (more rarely) 2 : 3. This metre was noticed by Budde in *Lamentations*, and has therefore received the name of *Qinah*, or Dirge metre. The parallelism is often internal, being incomplete without compensation; it is, however, sometimes external, and there are scholars who feel a difference between the two types. The divergence, however, does not seem to be great enough to justify us in regarding the two as being essentially different metres. The 2 : 3 is in a different position, and it is often held that its appearance is due either to textual corruption or to misunderstanding of the spirit manifested in the verse. The Hebrew mind was prone to emphasize a word, or even a syllable, by dwelling on that which preceded it, and even making a slight pause. This tendency is manifest even in the basic phonetic principles of the language, where a long vowel in an open syllable naturally precedes the heavily stressed tone-syllable. The mind is kept, as it were, in suspense, and the effect of what follows is thereby greatly heightened. So in Ps. 42⁴ it may well be that the poet meant us to read :

“Should I recall this, then I would pour out—
my (very) self upon me ! ”

There are, however, lines which can be nothing but 2 : 3. Thus in Ps. 76^{5b} we have :

Nor find any men of valour their hands,

where the words “any men of valour”, being connected by the construct relation, cannot admit of any division between them. Again, Ps. 79¹³ runs :

We will praise thee for ever to all generations will we tell thy praise,

and the term "to all generations" is almost certainly a balance to "for ever" in the first verse-member.¹

There is some close and intimate connexion between the 2 : 2 and the 3 : 2 (2 : 3). It is seldom that we find any poem in which either occurs alone. Usually the majority of the lines are 3 : 2, with a small number of 2 : 2 and an occasional 2 : 3. Thus Ps. 23 is 3 : 2 except in v. 4, which consists of three 2 : 2 lines, and here it is noticeable that the quicker rhythm may indicate a heightening of the emotional tension. In Ps. 55 we have approximately thirty 3 : 2 lines, and not more than six in 2 : 2. Ps. 84 contains nineteen lines, of which fifteen are 3 : 2, three 2 : 2, and one (the last) 2 : 3. Even in *Lamentations* a fair proportion of 2 : 2 lines appears, and we may safely say that the variation was felt to be no irregularity by the Hebrew poet.

Another mode of expansion was by a process of triplication. This might take three forms. The simplest method was to add a term to each member, producing 3 : 3. This is by far the commonest metre in the *Psalms*, and the whole of the poem of Job is written in it. Its parallelism is usually internal, and, as we have already seen, it is capable of a very wide range of variety.

The second method is the addition of a whole two-term verse-member, yielding a 2 : 2 : 2. This is far from common in the *Psalms*, though it is not infrequent in the prophets, and occasionally appears even in *Job*. Occasionally all three members seem to stand apart, and the two *cæsuras* are of equal value. In this case we may have a threefold internal parallelism as, for instance, in Ps. 59⁶:

They come back at even, they growl as dogs, and go about the city.

More often, however, one of the *cæsuras* is weaker than the other, though both are always there; the line may look rather like 4 : 2 or 2 : 4. Thus in Ps. 73¹⁸ we have a line in which the third member is parallel to the first two taken together:

*Surely in slippery places thou settest them,
in beguiling thou bringest them down.*

On the other hand, in Ps. 75⁷ we have:

For God is Judge, one he bringeth low, and one he lifteth up.

where the three members are quite distinct, but the second is more closely allied through parallelism to the third than to the first.

The 2 : 2 : 2 is rarely if ever found alone. There are a few passages in the prophets in which it is the only form, but these are always very short, and are almost certainly no more than fragments. Three consecutive 2 : 2 : 2 lines occur in Ps. 68⁷⁻⁸, but here again we are dealing

¹ For full discussion of this point see Gray, *Forms of Hebrew Poetry*, pp. 176 ff.

with a mosaic of short extracts. The metre is normally an occasional variation in the midst of 3 : 3 lines. Of the twenty complete lines composing what is left of Ps. 59, three are 2 : 2 : 2, and two of the three are identical. Of the ten lines in Ps. 75²⁻¹⁰, nine are 3 : 3 and one is 2 : 2 : 2. Ps. 88 (twenty lines) contains one 2 : 2 : 2. Though a "regular" variant to the 3 : 3 (the prophetic evidence is much stronger than that of the Psalter), it is much less frequent than the 2 : 2 interchanging with the 3 : 2.

Finally we may have a triplication even of the 3 : 3, a third and similar member being added. In lines of this type the three parts may be equally connected, all being parallel to one another. Thus Ps. 60⁸ runs :

Moab is my wash-pot ; over Edom will I cast my shoe ; over Philistia I raise a shout.

In Ps. 79², however, we have a line in which the third member is really parallel to the first two taken together :

*They have given the carcases of thy servants as food to the birds of the heavens,
the flesh of thy saints to the beasts of the field.*

The 3 : 3 : 3 occurs as an occasional variant to the 3 : 3, being a little more frequent than the 2 : 2 : 2. There are, however, from time to time, longer consecutive sections, and even whole poems, written in this metre. It runs all through Ps. 77¹⁶⁻¹⁹, which, on grounds independent of metre, seems to be taken from another source than that of the earlier verses of the psalm. Ps. 93 is a particularly fine example, owing to the striking effect of the "stair-like" internal parallelism, which brings each line to a climax.

We have thus two main types of metre : a 3 : 2 varied by 2 : 3 and 2 : 2, and a 3 : 3 varied by 2 : 2 : 2 and 3 : 3 : 3. A third is found, though it is rare. This is a line in which there are seven terms, usually arranged as 4 : 3, though occasionally as 3 : 4. It nearly always happens that the four-term member is capable of still further subdivision into 2 : 2. The best illustration in the Hebrew Bible is the great chaos-vision in Jer. 4²³⁻²⁶, but it is found in a few psalms, e.g., in Ps. 58, and frequently occurs in isolated lines in *Proverbs*. A glance at the parallelism shows that it really is a three-member line. Thus in Jer. 4²³ we have :

I beheld the earth, and lo ! chaos ; and the heavens, and light had they none.

Here, while the first two members are quite distinct, the third is parallel to the two taken together. The first two members are even closer in Ps. 58⁶ :

*O God, crush their teeth in their mouth, the fangs of the young lion uproot ;
but in Ps. 58³ :*

Estranged are the wicked, from the womb do they err, from birth they speak falsehood,

we have three members which are co-ordinately parallel, though the third member is longer than either of the others.

One other feature of Hebrew poetry requires mention. It happens from time to time that a word at the beginning of a line stands by itself, remaining outside the metrical scheme and forming an *anacrusis*. Again we meet with the Hebrew tendency to use a pause for emphasis. Only a few words are found in this position, and they are mostly interjections, vocatives, and pronouns, though sometimes a word of saying takes this place. An illustration is to be found in Ps. 55⁶, where the insertion of "And I said" between two lines tends to bring out into strong relief the force of the words which follow—so in Ps. 73¹¹, 83⁵. An emphatic pronoun appears in Ps. 77¹⁴ and 88¹³, and a vocative in Ps. 88¹, 90¹. The "Wherefore?" of Ps. 88¹⁴ and the "How long!" of Ps. 79⁵ are interjections rather than interrogatives, and "Therefore" in Ps. 78²¹ serves to bring out strongly the consequences of Israel's unbelief as described in the preceding verses.

There is one question relating to metre on which the opinion of Old Testament scholars is still sharply divided. There are, on the one hand, those who hold that the same metre always persisted throughout a poem, and that any irregularity must be due to textual corruption. On the other hand, many believe that a poet might introduce more than one metre, or might even mix them indiscriminately. A discussion of this point would take far too much space; suffice it to say that the present writer is inclined to the former of the two views mentioned, and holds that the metre of each poem was normally "regular". Earlier students of metre were apt to be very rigid; but a large number of "irregularities" disappear when it is realized that certain variations—2:2 with 3:2 and 2:2:2 with 3:3—are "regular", just as the dactyl and the spondee both occur in the classical hexameter. Other variations—3:3 with 3:2 and vice versa—seem to be due to later modification of the text. Where we have parallel passages in the Old Testament, we can sometimes see that one form is "regular", while the other is not, and the evidence of the Septuagint (more in some books than in others) points in the same direction. We know that our texts have suffered in course of transmission, and it is hoped that the small number of conjectural emendations made *metri gratia* in the following pages will not appear to be excessive.

There still remains an aspect of Hebrew poetic form on which we must briefly touch. We have glanced at the smallest unit, the significant term, at the combination of terms into verse-members, and the linking of verse-members to form single lines. Can we discover a still larger unit, corresponding to the stanza in modern poetry? The analogy of many other kinds of liturgical poetry suggests that we can, and since the beginning of the last century it has been customary to

speak of the "strophes" of a Hebrew poem. The term is less suitable than "stanza", for the sections of poetry indicated by it are more closely allied to the "verses" of a modern hymn than to the divisions of a Greek chorus, but the word has become so familiar that it may be retained.

Strophic theory owes its origin to an article by Kösters which appeared in the *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* for 1831. It was extremely simple, and was based on the number of verses which went to make up the strophe. From this point of view, there are two broad classes of poems: (a) those which have similar strophes, *i.e.*, those in which all the strophes contain the same number of lines, though sometimes an "interpolated" verse occurs between two strophes; (b) those which have dissimilar strophes. The latter, again, may be still further classified into (i) poems with parallel strophes, in which groups of the same length are repeated or alternate regularly, (ii) anti-strophic poems, where a series of dissimilar strophes is repeated; (c) climactic poems, in which each strophe is regularly longer than its predecessor; (d) dithyrambic poems, in which the arrangement is completely free. Three criteria may be used in determining the limits of the strophes within a poem: (a) a "refrain", which may occur at the beginning, at the end, or in the middle of a strophe; (b) a break in the sense; (c) the presence of *Selah* at the end of a strophe.

A few illustrations may be cited from those given by Kösters. Ps. 2 has four similar strophes of three verses each. Ps. 110 contains two three-verse strophes with an interpolated verse between them. Ps. 46 has three three-verse strophes, each closed with *Selah*, and there is a refrain at the end of the second and third strophes. Ps. 45 is antistrophic, being of the following form: 1:1:3:3:1:3:3:1:1. Ps. 27 has four strophes arranged in parallels: 3:3:4:4.

Kösters' views have been widely accepted, with some slight modification. Instead of the Masoretic verse, the actual poetic line has been regarded as the unit to be counted in estimating the length of a strophe, an improvement first suggested by Merx in 1857. There has been a tendency to insist that all the strophes of any particular poem must be of the same length, and, indeed, it would seem that this is almost necessary if the strophe is to have any real meaning as an element in poetic form. Certainly Kösters' last type consists simply of poems in which there is no systematic grouping of verses or lines, though, naturally, the whole may be divided into paragraphs, and we might as well reduce *Paradise Lost* to stanza form. The rigid application of strophic theory, as it may be seen, for instance, in the work of Briggs, inevitably results in some very drastic surgery. No doubt our texts have suffered corruption as they have been handed down, but we are suspicious of a principle which requires the rejection of so large

a number of lines as this does. The divisions, too, are at times somewhat arbitrary, and it may be doubted whether we can say that all Hebrew poems were originally intended to be strophic in form. Where we have a refrain, as in Pss. 42-43, we may be reasonably certain that the sections were originally intended to balance one another. Alphabetic poems like Ps. 119 are clearly capable of such an arrangement, though in one instance, Lam. 3, the sense-divisions do not always correspond to the alphabetic structure. There are psalms—*e.g.*, Ps. 77—in which it seems possible that *Selah* marked the end of each division, and that these divisions were once of uniform length. On the other hand, none of these criteria can be said to indicate proper strophic division in every psalm in which it appears, and we shall do well to find a strophic structure only in a limited number, where it is fairly obvious. The theory is of value in some instances, but it may easily be pressed too far.

CHAPTER V

TEXT AND VERSIONS

FROM one point of view the text of the Psalter presents us with problems which hardly arise in dealing with other books of the Old Testament. It is generally admitted that many of the psalms have a fairly long history behind them. Some of them may have been, and probably were, comparatively ancient, but each period in the history of Israel's religion has modified and adapted them to suit its own needs or its own special point of view. The recovery of the original form is practically impossible, for every attempt is necessarily exposed to a high degree of subjectivity. There are instances, it is true, in which the alterations are sufficiently obvious to enable us to say with some certainty what the earlier text was, but this seldom carries us far. In Pss. 42-83, for example, we have a whole collection of psalms in which the word *Elohim* (= God; a general term) has been substituted for the personal name of the God of Israel, *Yahweh*. Even here, it seems, copyists have occasionally gone back to the original reading, though they have left the modified text in the great majority of cases. Are we, then, to restore "Yahweh" wherever it seems desirable in this group? That is the method adopted by many commentators, and there is much to be said for it. In the following pages, however, the text has, generally, been retained in this matter, as it has come down to us, on the ground that this is but one of numerous changes that have taken place during the history of individual psalms, and, since there is practical unanimity among our witnesses (the change was made before the book was translated into Greek, and, indeed, before the Psalter reached its present form), it has been felt that the right course to pursue has been to try to maintain the text as it stood when the final compilation of the book was effected. An exception has been made in those cases where we have two versions of the same psalm in our present book, *e.g.*, in treating of Pss. 14 and 53. Here we have evidence which we can regard as sufficiently reliable to enable us to say with some assurance what the common text was in certain passages. For the rest it has been necessary to depend on the normal methods of textual criticism.

As in other books of the Old Testament, the Masoretic text, which is the official Hebrew text handed down through ancient Palestinian tradition, presents us with very few variations. Differences as between Hebrew MSS. seldom go beyond minor details in pointing, and are

generally due to the grammatical theories of the scribes, the inclusion or omission of the letters *Waw* and *Yodh* where they have been inserted to indicate long vowels, and the "accents". The widest differences are probably those to be noted in a MS. now in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge, known as G₁, but even here the variations in the consonantal text are almost confined to letters easily confused in the square script, such as *Beth* and *Kaph* or *He* and *Heth*. Where it is probable that the text is corrupt, we have to rely on other evidence and other methods for correcting it.

We are thus compelled to turn to the ancient Versions. Among these the old Greek Version, known as the Septuagint, stands pre-eminent. It was made in Egypt, and, as quotations in the New Testament and contemporary literature show, was well established by the beginning of the Christian era (it may be remarked that Philo's citations sometimes exhibit verbal differences from the received Greek text, but nowhere suggest an independent translation; the modifications belong rather to the sphere of Septuagint criticism). Here we have a text which, in places, differs considerably from that of the Palestinian tradition, though we are sometimes inclined to suspect that the translators were ignorant of the meaning of a Hebrew word and simply guessed it. Next to the Masoretic text itself, however, the Septuagint remains the most valuable witness we have, and it has frequently been used in the following pages for the restoration of doubtful passages. In this connexion it may be as well to point out that in a very large number of cases where there is disagreement between the two, the Masoretic text has been preferred. There are three other well-known Greek versions: those of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion. Of these, in so far as they have survived, that of Aquila is the most useful, since it is a slavishly literal rendering of the Hebrew text which the translator had before him. That text differed but little from the traditional Hebrew form, though occasionally it offers us an interesting variation.

Next in age and importance to the Septuagint comes the Syriac Version, commonly called the Peshitta. Its origin is obscure; we are not even certain whether it is Jewish or Christian. While certain crucial passages are interpreted in a Christian sense (*e.g.*, Isa. 7¹⁴), we have to allow for the possibility of deliberate Christian modification. In the particular instance cited, the rendering might have been defended on the ground that it corresponded to that of the Septuagint, which was certainly pre-Christian. The Syriac Version of the Psalter was made from the Palestinian Hebrew text, and stands much nearer to it than does the Septuagint. There are, however, clear indications which show that the translators were aware of the Greek Version and were, to some extent, influenced by it. A striking instance is the rendering of

the familiar *Selah*, for which the Syriac has a transliteration of the Greek *Diapsalma*. It is comparatively seldom that this Version offers an independent reading which may be accepted as original.

The only other Version which needs to be considered is the Vulgate. The first translation into Latin was made from the Septuagint, and is valuable as evidence for the text of that Version, but it is not a direct witness to the Hebrew text. The wide differences between the current Old Testament and the Hebrew text led Jerome to undertake a completely new revision of the whole. This is the version which has become the official Bible of the Roman Catholic Church. The fourth-century text attested by this Vulgate differed only slightly from the Hebrew as it has come down to us; occasional variations may be detected by comparing the Prayer-Book Version of the *Psalms* with that of the Authorized Version, *e.g.*, the two readings in Ps. 19⁴: "Their sound is gone out" (P.B.V.) and "Their line is gone out" (A.V.) imply a difference of one consonant in the Hebrew text. It is, however, comparatively seldom that a reading peculiar to the Vulgate commends itself as being original against the weight of all other authorities.

When, however, all available help has been received from the Versions, there remain countless passages in which the reader of the Hebrew text feels that it cannot be as the psalmist wrote it. Sometimes there is direct violation of a basic rule of grammar; sometimes the words make no sense whatever (in some of these cases, it may be remarked, the English Versions tacitly alter the text). Here we may admit that if our knowledge of Hebrew were more extensive than it is, it might be possible to discover a meaning for the text as it stands, and a good deal has been done in recent years by the use of comparative philology to elucidate passages hitherto regarded as unintelligible. But this expedient also carries us only a short distance, and in a very large number of places we are forced to guess at what the original text was. A few of these guesses commend themselves at once, and will receive general acceptance, but in the great majority of the passages where the text has been emended in the following pages it is frankly admitted that we cannot be at all certain that the text translated is what the psalmist wrote. We can only say that, in the judgement of the best Hebrew scholarship available, the words adopted are grammatical and intelligible, and may well have been those which the writer actually used. Conjectural emendation is inevitable; to use a phrase employed by one of our great scholars, it is at least as defensible as "conjectural translation". We can only hope that we have been rightly guided in our choice of the text, and that the readings adopted in this commentary will at least help to bring home the message of the psalmists.

CHAPTER VI

THE PSALMS AND THE LITERATURES OF THE ANCIENT EAST

THE religious literature of the Ancient East, of which a large amount of material has come down to us, consists of mythological epics, festal odes, songs of praise, hymns of thanksgiving, penitential psalms, prayers, and didactic poems. That similar compositions appear in the *Psalms*, showing numerous points of contact in thought, as well as verbal parallels, with the writings of other ancient peoples, amply justifies the contention that the Hebrew psalms must be regarded as part of a world-literature. That in numerous instances the Hebrew psalmists were indebted to extraneous influences in composing their psalms is, therefore, highly probable; but in such cases adaptation rather than imitation was their guiding principle. For numerous as borrowed thoughts and parallels are, what appears as the most striking phenomenon in comparing the different bodies of literature is the manifest superiority of the Hebrew psalms as religious compositions. So much so that, while fully recognizing Hebrew psalmody as part of a world-literature, it must nevertheless be regarded as *sui generis*. This is not to deny the great beauty and the many indications of deep religious feeling expressed in Babylonian and Egyptian hymns; but what must be insisted on is that the Hebrew psalms, regarded from the purely religious point of view, stand on a different, and incomparably higher, level. At the same time, it is in no sense derogatory to these to say that the type of devotional literature of which the Biblical psalms are the supreme example, was not the exclusive possession of any one nation of antiquity; but that the innate urge of expressing the relationship felt by men between them and supernatural powers, impelled many devout spirits of various nationality to put their feelings into the concrete form of religious poems.

We shall now give some illustrations from the religious literatures of Babylonia and Egypt in order to show in how many respects there is a similarity of *genus* between these and Hebrew psalmody.

For the illustrations to be offered we are indebted to the following authors:—

Bertholet, *Religionsgeschichtliches Lesebuch* (1908).

Erman, *Die Literatur der Ägypter* (1923).

„ *Die Religion der Ägypter* (1934).

Gressmann, *Altorientalische Texte Zum Alten Testament* (1926).

Gunkel, *Ausgewählte Psalmen* (1904).

- Jastrow, *Die Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens* (1905, 1912).
 Jeremias, *Handbuch des altorientalischen Geisteskultur* (1929).
 „ *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des alten Orients*
 (1930).
 Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien* (1920, 1925).
 Winckler, *Keilinschriftliches Textbuch zum Alten Testament*
 (1909).
 Zimmern, *Babylonische Hymnen und Gebete* ("Der alte Orient," 1905-1911).

In order to avoid giving a large number of footnotes, we shall not indicate the references to the various quotations taken from these works.

It may be pointed out, first, that in outward form, *i.e.*, the *cæsura* making a pause between the two halves of a line, the Hebrew psalms are similar to Babylonian and Egyptian poetical form,¹ and this is also true as regards metrical beats. Thus, to quote a few lines from a Babylonian psalm :

Every day pay homage	unto thy god,
With sacrifice, prayer,	and incense, due.
Unto thy god	be thine heart's inclination,
That is the thing	which is due to the deity.
Supplication, entreaty,	with thy face to the ground,
Bring before him at morn ;	then mighty will be thy strength,
And with great abundance	will be thy pleading with the god.

The last line means that the petitioner's prayer will be abundantly answered. Not that this metrical form occurs always ; there are plenty of poems in which it is entirely absent ; but the fact that it is, nevertheless, often found is interesting in view of Hebrew usage. In Egyptian poems the same holds good ; *e.g.*, in a harvest-song we have what certainly reads like the divided line :

Thresh for yourselves,	thresh for yourselves, ye oxen !
Thresh for yourselves,	thresh for yourselves !
The straw is for fodder,	the corn for your masters ;
Be not weary,	(the air) is cool.

So far as metrical beats are concerned, there seems to be some uncertainty ; but Erman believes that their presence must be postulated in many cases. He also mentions the frequent occurrence of the repetition of the same thought in each half of a line ; *e.g.* :

Then spake these friends of the king, and they answered before their god ;

the same thing occurs in Babylonian hymns ; thus, in a hymn in honour of the goddess of healing, Ninkarrag, it is said :

Ninkarrag, the daughter of Anu,	will I praise !
Out of her house of joy,	out of her chamber, hath she gone forth.

¹ The Ras Shamra poetry also shows normally the parallelism so characteristic of Hebrew poetry.

In the Hebrew psalms this often occurs. So much, then, for the outward form of ancient poems.

To come now to some of the Babylonian and Egyptian hymns and psalms in which we find points of thought-contact with the Hebrew psalms. As an illustration of the mythological ode, we may give a quotation from the Babylonian Creation-myth (Fourth Tablet), which lies at the back of such passages as Ps. 74¹³⁻¹⁵, 89⁹⁻¹⁴, 104⁶⁻⁹—namely, the conflict between Marduk and Tiamat; the Hebrew psalmist has taken the rôle of the hero-god Marduk, and applied it to Yahweh:

Then did stand forth,

They arose for the battle
The lord spread forth
The blast behind him
Then Tiamat opened her mouth
He caused the blast to gush into her,
The raging gusts
Her heart was o'erwhelmed,
He thrust in his lance,
Cut into her inside,
When he had overcome her,
Her carcase he threw down,

Tiamat and Marduk, the wise one of the gods,
drawing near for the fray.
his net, he caught her therein,
he let loose before her;
that she might engulph him,
so that she could not close her lips;
then filled her belly,
her mouth she opened wide,
split open her belly,
tore her heart in twain.
he destroyed her life;
upon it he stood.

Then, after the description of how he vanquished all those who had sided with Tiamat, it continues:

Thereupon the lord rested,
To divide the bulk,
He rent her like a shell,¹
One half of her he placed,
He drew a bolt,
Not to let her waters issue forth
He traversed the heavens,
He placed over against them ² Apsu,³

surveying her corpse,
to perform a device.
into two parts;
and covered heaven's roof therewith,
and stationed watchers,
did he give them charge.
he surveyed the spaces,
Nudimmud's ⁴ dwelling-place.

In spite of this somewhat involved description, the central point will be recognized—viz., the primeval combat between Marduk and Tiamat, representing the victory of the god over the powers of evil. This is what is borrowed, and adapted to Yahweh in a number of Old Testament passages, among them several psalms.

Our next illustration is an Egyptian hymn of praise in honour of the Sun-god, Amon-Re, the highest among all the gods; it belongs to the middle of the fifteenth century B.C. As will be seen, there are various instances in it of thoughts and expressions which find a parallel in verses of some of the Hebrew psalms. There is no question here of borrowing; but such parallels illustrate the existence of similarity of mental outlook on the part of religious poets, expressed in their poems. This hymn of praise has, like some of the Hebrew psalms, a somewhat lengthy title; it runs: "Praise of Amon-Re, the Bull of

¹ According to some authorities "gazelle".

² *I.e.*, the heavens.

³ The Deep.

⁴ Ea, one of the great gods, and father of Marduk.

Heliopolis, chief of all the gods, of the good god, the loved one, who giveth life to all that liveth, and to every healthy herd". The hymn then follows:

Praise to thee, Amon-Re, thou lord of Karnak, thou chief one of Thebes !
 Thou Bull of its mother, who art supreme on his field !¹
 Thou that proceedest o'er wide spaces, thou chief one of Upper Egypt, lord of Matoiland, and lord of Punt.
 Thou, greatest in heaven (cp. Ps. 89^a), most ancient on earth ; thou, lord of all that is, that abidest in all things.²
 The only one of his kind among the gods (cp. Ps. 86^a, 96^a, 135^b), the stately Bull³ of the thrice-three gods,⁴ the lord of all gods.
 Lord of truth (cp. Ps. 31^b), father of the gods, who made men, and created the beasts (cp. Ps. 33^a, 65^{b-13}, 148³⁻¹⁰).
 Lord of all that is, who bringeth forth fruit-trees, who formeth the herbs, who nourisheth the cattle (cp. Ps. 104¹⁴).
 The beautiful figure, formed by Ptah⁵ ; the comely youth, honoured by the gods, Who made those above and those beneath⁶ ; who giveth light to the two lands,⁷ Who rideth, exulting, across the skies (cp. Ps. 19^a), the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Re, the justified one ;⁸
 The chief of the two lands, the mighty one, the lord of power ; the most exalted who formed the whole land.
 More excellent in nature than any god, whose beauty the gods proclaim ; he is glorified in his temple, and crowned in the flame-sanctuary (cp. Ps. 11^a, 134²) ;⁹
 Whose sweet odour the gods love, when he cometh from Punt¹⁰ ; rich in perfume when he cometh down from Matoiland, with his lovely countenance from the land of the god.¹¹
 The gods crouch close at his feet when in his majesty they acknowledge him as their lord, the terrible and fearsome one, of glorious nature, mighty in appearance, nourished by offerings, and giver of food.
 Praise to thee, who didst create the gods, who didst raise the heavens on high, and didst stretch forth the earth.

For another illustration of a hymn of praise to the Sun-god, see under Ps. 104.

In the Psalter there are about twenty psalms of thanksgiving ; in the following one of similar character, sung to Amon, it will be seen that thoughts and expressions occur which have their parallel in some of the Hebrew psalms of thanksgiving :

In Praise of Amon.

I sing hymns of praise to his name (cp. Ps. 30^a, 34^a, 116^a),
 I praise him, as high as the heaven, as wide as the earth (cp. Ps. 57^b, 11),
 I will tell of his power to him that goeth up and him that goeth down.¹²

¹ " The sun is the husband of the goddess of heaven, and as the sun of each day he is also her son. Just as the bull is supreme in the field in which he grazes, so is the sun supreme in the heavens (his field), since he is the greatest of the constellations " (Erman).

² *I.e.*, the sun penetrates everywhere.

³ Synonym for " leader " (Erman).

⁴ The divine triad, father, mother, and child, often appearing in early Egyptian religion.

⁵ The artist among the gods who constructed the figure of Amon.

⁶ *I.e.*, the stars (gods) above, and men beneath.

⁷ *I.e.*, Upper and Lower Egypt.

⁸ Re once reigned as king on earth, his excellence is justified by his having become a god.

⁹ The reference is to the two sanctuaries in the ancient capitals of Upper and Lower Egypt (Erman).

¹⁰ The coast-land of the present Abyssinia and Somaliland, whence incense was brought.

¹¹ *I.e.*, where the sun rises, the east.

¹² The reference is to those who passed his temple in sailing up and down the Nile.

Take heed before him ! Tell of it to son and daughter, to great and small ;
 Tell of it from generation to generation, even to the generations not yet born
 (cp. Ps. 22^{30, 31}) ;
 Tell of it to the fish in the water, and to the birds of the air ;
 Tell of it to him that knoweth, and to him that knoweth not.
 Take heed before him !
 Thou, Amon, art lord of the silent one, that comest at the voice of the poor (cp.
 Ps. 34^{8, 40}¹⁷) ;
 When I cried unto thee in my trouble, thou didst come to deliver me (cp. Ps. 66¹⁷ ¹⁹),
 to give breath to the feeble, to save me, a prisoner (cp. Ps. 142⁷) ;
 Thou art he, Amon-Re of Thebes, who deliverest him that is in the underworld
 (cp. Ps. 30^{3, 116}^{3, 4, 9}) ;
 When one crieth unto thee thou dost come from afar (cp. Ps. 119¹⁶⁹).

In this hymn the thanksgiving is implicit, the god's mercies being acknowledged.

Our next illustration is a Babylonian penitential psalm :

O warrior Marduk, whose wrath is a storm-flood (cp. Ps. 21⁹),
 Whose forgiveness is that of a merciful father (cp. Ps. 103¹³),
 My cry unheeded, hath cast me down,
 My entreaty unanswered, hath oppressed me sore ;
 My strength is torn from mine heart,
 I am bowed down like an aged man.
 O mighty lord, Marduk, the merciful,
 Who among all men that are living
 Is there that discerneth my state ?
 Who is not wanting, who hath not sinned ? (cp. Ps. 69⁶).
 Who apprehendeth the way of a god ? (cp. Ps. 139⁶).
 Let me give praise that I err not in godlessness,
 Let me be present in the place of life (*i.e.*, the sanctuary, cp. Ps. 27⁴).¹

Finally, a few isolated passages which offer some interesting parallels ; they are taken from both Babylonian and Egyptian hymns, but it will not be necessary to indicate these, as our object is simply to illustrate some points of general similarity in the religious literatures of the Ancient East.

In Ps. 2¹¹ we have given reasons in the Commentary for emending the text so as to read : *Serve Yahweh in fear, and with trembling kiss his feet* ; as a synonym for submission, whether to a conqueror or to a god, to " kiss the feet " is a frequent phrase in ancient inscriptions and hymns ; thus, it is said in a Babylonian hymn to Marduk that Ea " hath commanded the kissing of thy feet, and hath ordained submission unto thee ".

Again, in Ps. 18³⁷⁻⁴⁰ it is told how by the help of Yahweh enemies are overcome :

*I pursued mine enemies and overtook them, and turned not till they were consumed . . .
 Thou didst gird me with strength for the battle, thou didst bow down beneath me those
 that rose up against me.*

With the same trust in divine help the Egyptian king, Ramses II, in a hymn to the god Amon, says, on finding himself in straits during a battle against the Hittites :

¹ Further interesting illustrations of such penitential hymns are given also by Witzel, *Tammuz Liturgie und Verwandtes* (1935).

But I cry, and perceive that better for me is Amon than millions of foot-soldiers, and hundreds of thousands of charioteers . . . the striving of many men is nought; Amon is better than they.

In Ps. 66¹¹ the metaphor of a "net" is used to denote the entanglement in which Yahweh involved his people in order to test them; the same metaphor is used of Yahweh punishing the people (Ezek. 12¹³). Similarly, it is told of the Babylonian god Bel that he casts his net: "O father Bel, thou dost cast the net, and that net becometh a hostile net."

We may consider next some interesting parallels regarding the person of the king. Ps. 72 is a psalm sung on the occasion of the enthronement of a king; it is too long to quote, but it may be pointed out that his advent is hailed with delight, for he will have a care for the poor and needy (vv. 4, 12, 13), and will save them from oppression and violence (v. 14), all kings shall fall down before him, and all nations shall serve him (v. 11), and his name shall endure for ever (v. 17); all is ascribed to the wondrous things that Yahweh accomplishes (v. 18). It will be seen that similar words are said in a hymn in honour of Ramses IV, on his enthronement:

A glorious day! Heaven and earth rejoice, for thou art the great ruler of Egypt. They that fled have returned to their cities, and they who had hidden have come back again.

They that hungered are satisfied and joyful, they that were thirsty drink their fill. They that were naked are clothed in fine linen, and they that were filthy have white garments.

They that were in prison are set at liberty, and they that were bound are full of joy . . .

The maidens rejoice and sing exultingly; they are adorned, and say . . . O thou ruler, thou endurest for ever . . .

All the nations say to him: Glorious is the king on Amon's throne, who hath sent him forth, the protector of the king, who leadeth all peoples to him.

Finally, two or three miscellaneous parallels. With the conception of the thunder being the voice of Yahweh (Ps. 29) we may compare the following from a hymn to the Babylonian god Adad-Ramman (the storm-god):

At thy thunder doth shake the great mountain, father Enlil,¹
At thy roaring doth tremble the great mother Ninlil.²

Again, there is a close parallel between Ps. 42⁴: *My tears have been my meat day and night*, and the plaint in a Babylonian hymn: "Food I ate not, weeping was my bread; water I drank not, tears were my drink"; and in another penitential psalm of similar character: "Weeping and tears cease not, with my sighs am I daily sated".

Finally, in Ps. 34¹³ it is said:

Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile;

¹ The god of the earth; it means that the earth shakes.

² The spouse of Enlil, also representing the earth.

with which we have a parallel in a Babylonian text :

Slander not, speak sweetly, Say nought that is evil, utter that which is good.

These illustrations could be greatly multiplied, but it is hoped that it has been sufficiently shown how much common ground there is between Hebrew psalmody and the devotional literature of other peoples ; thus justifying the contention that the Hebrew psalms, great as is their superiority over all others, must nevertheless be recognized as belonging to a world-literature.

CHAPTER VII

THE KINGSHIP OF YAHWEH

SOME consideration of this subject is demanded, because in a certain number of psalms there are indications of their having been sung in celebration of the "Enthronement of Yahweh". That this was a ceremony of great significance there can be no shadow of doubt. At the same time, it must be insisted on that to speak of the "Festival of the Enthronement of Yahweh" as though it constituted in itself a festival, is a mistake; for there was certainly no festival of this name known to the Israelites. A significant fact in this connexion should be noted: in the early accounts of the celebration of the New Year Festival in the Synagogue mention is made of a number of thoughts and expressions which occur in the "Enthronement" psalms, viz. the Kingship of Yahweh, his Kingdom over all the world, Yahweh as Judge, the holiness of his name, the "shout", and the *shôphar*-blast; but there is not a hint of the Enthronement ceremony.¹ If there had ever been a Festival of the Enthronement, a reference to it of some kind would surely have been forthcoming. The Enthronement of Yahweh was the initial ceremony, though one of central importance, performed at one of the great feasts. Which of these feasts it was at which this ceremony took place, what the origin of that feast was, its significance and purpose, are matters which will be discussed as we proceed.

Opinions differ markedly as to the number of psalms in which this ceremony is referred to; some scholars believe they can see references to it in a large number of psalms²; we submit, however, that when once it is recognized that the Enthronement of Yahweh did not constitute a festival in itself, but was only the initial ceremony of one of the feasts, the number of psalms which refer to the ceremony is reduced to those which make actual mention of it; these are the psalms in which the phrase "Yahweh is become King" occurs.

We shall begin our discussion by quoting all the passages in the psalms which refer to the Kingship of Yahweh. They are of three classes: (1) those in which Yahweh is spoken of as "King"; (2) those

¹ Elbogen, *Der jüdische Gottesdienst* . . . , pp. 140-149 (1913).

² We have made a study of Mowinckel, *Psalmstudien*, II. *Das Thronbesteigungsfest Jahwäs* . . . (1922), and of Hans Schmidt, *Die Thronfahrt Jhaves* (1927), and must confess that their arguments entirely fail to convince us; the large number of psalms they quote, especially the former, as referring to the "Festival of Yahweh's Enthronement" refer to the *feast* of which this was only one element.

in which the "throne" of Yahweh is referred to; and (3) those in which the phrase "Yahweh is become King" occurs.

(1) THE TITLE OF "KING" APPLIED TO YAHWEH:

- 5². *Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King and my God.*
 10¹⁶. *Yahweh is King for ever and ever.*
 24⁷⁻¹⁰. . . . *Who is the King of glory? Yahweh, strong and mighty . . .*
 29¹⁰. *Yahweh sitteth as King for ever.*
 48². . . . *mount Zion, the city of the great King.*
 74¹². *God is my King from of old; some commentators, probably rightly, would read Thou, Yahweh, art my King from of old.*
 84³. . . . *Yahweh Zebaoth, my King and my God.*
 95⁸. *For Yahweh is a great God, and a great King above all gods.*
 98⁶. *Make a joyful noise before the King; "Yahweh" is probably a later addition as it overloads the half-line.*
 149². *Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.*

In 9⁷, cp. 29¹⁰, the title is, no doubt, implied. In 20⁹ the title is not applied to Yahweh, but is in reference to the earthly king. It occurs also in 47², but this comes also under our third class of passages. It may be added that the title of "King" is applied to Yahweh in Isa. 44⁶, Mic. 2¹³, Zeph. 3¹⁵.

(2) REFERENCES TO THE THRONE OF YAHWEH:

- 9⁴. *Thou satest on thy throne judging righteously.*
 9⁷. *He hath set up his throne for judgement.*
 11⁴. *Yahweh, in heaven is his throne.*
 47⁸. . . . *he sitteth upon his holy throne.*
 89¹⁴. *Righteousness and justice are the stay of thy throne.*
 93². *Established is his throne from of old.*
 97². *Righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.*
 103¹⁹. *Yahweh in the heavens hath established his throne.*

Outside the Psalter the mention of Yahweh's throne occurs in 1 Kgs. 22¹⁹, 2 Chron. 18¹⁸, Isa. 6¹, 66¹, Jer. 14²¹, 17¹², Lam. 5¹⁹, Ezek. 1²⁶, 10¹, 43⁷.

(3) PASSAGES IN WHICH THE PHRASE "YAHWEH IS BECOME KING" OCCURS:

- 47⁷. ⁸. in both verses we should probably read "Yahweh" for "God": *Yahweh is become King of all the earth; Yahweh is become King over the nations.*
 93¹. *Yahweh is become King apparelled in majesty.*
 96¹⁰. *Declare among the nations, Yahweh is become King.*
 97¹. *Yahweh is become King, let the earth rejoice.*
 99¹. *Yahweh is become King, let the peoples tremble.*

The phrase occurs also in Isa. 24²³; in Mic. 4⁷ the text is uncertain. When we come to inquire, What is the significance of speaking of Yahweh as "King", and of the phrase "Yahweh is become King"? we enter upon a very controversial subject. According to some authorities, among whom Gunkel¹ is an outstanding figure, the expression "Yahweh is become King" is an adaptation of the saluta-

¹ *Einleitung in die Psalmen*, pp. 95 ff. (1933).

tion addressed to the newly made temporal king, to a spiritual use. In 2 Sam. 15¹⁰, for example, it is said: "But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the ram's-horn (*šóphar*) then shall ye say, Absalom is become king in Hebron". It must, however, be observed that as a technical expression, addressed to a newly made king, ". . . is become king", does not occur elsewhere; if it were the usual mode of recognition, we should expect to find it more frequently expressed.

On the other hand, as Gunkel clearly shows, the *ceremonial* observed at the enthronement of the king has a number of parallels in the psalms referred to; two especially outstanding ceremonies are described: the anointing by a priest with the placing of the crown on the king's head, followed by a solemn procession up the hill of Zion, and the formal sitting on the throne (1 Kgs. 1³⁴, 38², 2 Kgs. 11¹², 1 Chron. 29²³).

In celebration of such a highly important event it would have been the obvious duty of the court poets to compose poems proper to the occasion, just as we have in Ps. 45 a poem written in honour of a royal marriage. But none such have come down to us. Gunkel, however, maintains that they must have existed, and that the so-called Enthronement psalms (*i.e.*, those mentioned above) were the sacred counterpart of such secular songs. But, as he points out—and this is the point of main importance—in adapting these secular songs, the psalmists brought into their sacred compositions eschatological elements (see below). Here some questions necessarily suggest themselves:

Why was the title "King" applied to Yahweh? How are we to understand the phrase, "Yahweh is become King"? What was the point and object of his Enthronement at the feast at which it was celebrated? Why did the psalmists embody eschatological material in the psalms in question?

In seeking to give answers to these questions we shall have to travel over a somewhat wide field, and the answers cannot always be kept distinct from one another, for the subjects to be dealt with do not admit of being separated off into different compartments.

It is common knowledge, and needs no emphasis, that the Israelites, in every stage of their history, were subject to extraneous influences, religious, cultural, and others; these influences were the more likely to have been effective in that they were exercised by peoples of greater antiquity and higher culture than the Israelites. In answer to our first question, Why was the title "King" applied to Yahweh? it must be replied that there was, so far as Israel was concerned, no justifiable reason for this; to apply a human title to their God, who was so immeasurably above men in every conceivable way, was alien to their religious sense. But owing to the force of extraneous influence, exercised by their powerful neighbours, they fell into the use; though

it occurs but rarely until later times, when it had acquired a special, an eschatological, meaning. The idea of a god as king is found among the Babylonians and the Egyptians. In the Babylonian Creation Epic known as *Enuma eliš*, from the opening words, "When above", it is told of how the gods, in their gratitude to Marduk for having overcome the monster Tiamat, "rejoiced, and rendered him homage (saying), Marduk is become king".¹ In another text it is said that the Kingdom, *i.e.*, the idea of royalty, came down from heaven.² Again, in Egyptian religion the god Horus was the king who first ruled over all men. The sign of the falcon stands both for "god" and "king".³ Other illustrations could be given. We submit, therefore, that whatever significance may have become attached to the title in later Jewish thought, in origin it was due to extraneous influence.

The answer to our next question, How are we to understand the phrase "Yahweh is become King"? is far more complicated. We must preface our remarks by asserting that the title of "King" applied to Yahweh has not *necessarily* any connexion with the technical phrase "Yahweh is become King", and all that it implies; in certain cases there certainly is a connexion between the two, but generally speaking this is not so.

It is quite certain, from the content of the psalms in which this phrase occurs, that they were sung liturgically at one of the great festivals. This is to be gathered from the fact that in these psalms ceremonies are referred to which necessarily imply liturgical usage. First, there is this phrase "Yahweh is become King"; a proclamation such as this must, from its very nature, have been uttered in reference to something that had just taken place; in other words, it refers to the ceremony of Yahweh having ascended his throne. However we may envisage the actual performance of this ceremony (see below), the words of Ps. 47^{5, 8} point to a ceremonial rite: *God ascendeth with a shout, Yahweh with the blast of the ram's-horn*; that the ascent upon his throne is here referred to is seen by the words: *Yahweh is become King over the nations, he sitteth upon his holy throne*. The mention of the "shout" and "the blast of the ram's-horn" point to an accompanying rite; similarly in Ps. 98⁶: *With trumpets and the blast of the ram's-horn make a joyful noise before the King*. That a ceremonial procession took place goes without saying, for this was the usual accompaniment to religious celebrations; some commentators take the words *God ascendeth with a shout* to be in reference to a procession ascending Mount Zion; it may be so, but the context seems to point to the ascent upon the throne. Another very important part of the ceremony

¹ Ebeling, in Gressmann's, *Altorientalische Texte zum alten Testament*, p. 109 (1926).

² *Ibid.*, p. 147.

³ Erman, *Die Religion der Ägypter*, p. 51 (1934).

was the commemoration of Yahweh as Creator; this was extremely appropriate; and in connexion with this it was natural enough that other elements in the Creation-story, as traditionally handed down, should be sung. Thus, the primeval combat of Yahweh with the waters of the great deep, conceived of as the embodiment of the evil powers, and his victory over them, receive notice; and the mythical picture is adapted and made to apply to God's victory over the nations. That this is eschatologically interpreted does not admit of doubt, hence the emphasis laid on Yahweh as Judge.

We must seek next to answer the question: What was the point and object of the ceremony of Yahweh's Enthronement? And here we come to the central part of our whole discussion; for, as we have insisted, this ceremony was the initial rite at the celebration of one of the great feasts. We have first to inquire what feast this was. It would necessarily have been a feast at which the Enthronement ceremony was appropriate; a feast which brought before the worshippers the thought of Yahweh's power and supremacy. There is plenty of evidence, though space forbids our going into details, to show that this feast was the New Year Festival, celebrated by the Israelites concurrently with the feast of Tabernacles.¹ That these two coincided is sufficiently well known,² and need not detain us; our main concern is to examine their nature and significance, and the connexion that the Enthronement ceremony had with them. To do this it is necessary to go back to origins.

In both ancient Egypt and Babylonia there was, in the celebration of the New Year Festival, a "ritual pattern", as Hooke appropriately designates it, representing "the things which were done to and by the king in order to secure the prosperity of the community in every sense for the coming year".³ The central feature was thus the importance of the king who, both in Egypt and Babylon, was regarded as divine, and represented the god in the great seasonal rituals. This does not, however, mean to say that the god himself was not worshipped; we have, for example, a very striking psalm sung at the New Year Festival in honour of the god Horus, who has overcome his enemies, and ascended upon his throne; this is worth quoting:

Come, shout, ye gods of the land,
Come, rejoice, ye men and people,
Come, sing praise with gladness of heart,
Horus hath ascended his throne . . .
He will refresh what lay waste,
He will gladden the downcast hearts,
He will save all men.
Regard ye Horus, he weareth his crown . . .
He strideth far and wide o'er the land.

¹ For details see Volz, *Das Neujahrsfest Jahwes*, pp. 12 ff. (1912).

² Oesterley, in *Myth and Ritual* (ed. S. H. Hooke), pp. 122 f. (1933).

³ *Myth and Ritual*, p. 8.

The 'Nine gods' kiss the ground before him . . .
 Regard ye Horus, ye gods and men,
 And rejoice because of his crown . . .
 He hath crushed the heads of his foes . . .
 Regard ye Horus, ye gods and men,
 How he entereth the conflict and conquereth,
 Like a blaze in the time of the storm,
 When it rageth in the midst of the thorn-bush,
 Consuming, and nothing is left.¹

Here a word must be said about the question of the ascription of divinity to the earthly king. That, as just remarked, the king was looked upon as divine in both Egypt and Babylon is indisputable. Thus, the Pharaoh of Egypt was identified with Ra²; in some of the titles applied to him he is called the god Horus; in one song he is called "our Horus"³; a reflection of this may be seen in the Tell-Amarna letters, where the Palestinian rulers address their Egyptian suzerain as "My Sun" (*Šamaš*). In much later times the Assyrian kings Ashurnasirpal and Shalmaneser II call themselves "the Sun of the peoples", whereby they wish to indicate their illimitable power.⁴ That the idea of the king-god was not unknown in Israel even as late as the time of Ezekiel is evident from what the prophet says: "Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyre, Thus saith the Lord Yahweh: Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a god, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art man, and not God, though thou didst set thine heart as the heart of God." We even find in two of the psalms an identification of the king with God: Ps. 45⁶, 110². We have drawn attention to this to show how the Israelites were influenced here by extraneous ideas. This is seen, further, when we compare the ritual of the New Year Festival, as celebrated in Egypt⁵ and Babylon⁶, with what is said in some of the psalms in references to the same Festival, and which coincides, as we have said, with the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkôth*). First we may point out that, with regard to Egypt and Babylon, while many gods are believed in, one stands out as creator and as the giver of the fruits of the earth; and the earthly king is identified with him. Among the Egyptians this highest god was Osiris, among the Babylonians he was Marduk. At the annual New Year Festival held in honour of these deities, in each case he was proclaimed king, the earthly king representing him; and this was realistically set forth by the rite of his ascent upon his throne; this was the opening ceremony at the celebration of the New Year Festival, and it was accompanied by the

¹ Translated from the German rendering of Erman, *Die Religion der Ägypter*, p. 372 (1934).

² Moret, *Du caractère religieux de la Royauté Pharaonique*, p. 310 (1902).

³ Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

⁴ Jastrow, *Die Religion Babylonien und Assyrien*, i, 221 (1905).

⁵ As described in the Ramesseum Papyrus (*Myth and Ritual*, p. 27).

⁶ As celebrated at the *Akitu* Festival (*Myth and Ritual*, p. 46).

recitation of the Creation drama. Just as in the beginning the god had created all things, so at the beginning of the New Year it was believed that he would repeat the act of creation so far as the fruits of the soil were concerned. The rite, with its various accompanying details which we need not dilate upon here, not only symbolized, but was believed actually to bring about, the revivification of Nature. Its supreme importance in the eyes of the people will, therefore, be realized.

Now, we have more than once insisted, and the fact will not be disputed, that the Israelites were to a considerable extent dominated by extraneous influences, and this in the religious as well as in other spheres. Here we have a striking illustration of this. What Osiris was to the Egyptians and what Marduk was to the Babylonians, Yahweh was to the Israelites. Each nation had its King-God. The New Year Festival of the Israelites was celebrated on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, when the Kingship of Yahweh was proclaimed, and when he was honoured as Lord of Creation by recalling his work of Creation at the beginning. Faith in his power gave the conviction that the produce of the soil during the coming year would be abundant. It is here that we see the significance of the references to the Kingship of Yahweh in the psalms sung at this festival; we need not quote from them, the relevant passages have been given above (p. 45).

We have already mentioned that at the New Year Festival in Egypt and Babylon an essential element was the recitation of the Creation Epic in order to honour the god as creator. That this was done during the Israelite celebration cannot be doubted when we recall some of the passages occurring in the psalms sung on this occasion; one or two quotations may be given. A reference to Yahweh's creative power, and faith in the continuance of the exercise of that power in the coming year, is clear in Ps. 65⁹⁻¹³:

*Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it,
The brook of God is full of water,*

thou greatly enrichest it.

*thou providest their corn, thus thou
preparest it :*

*Thou waterest her furrows, levelling the ridges,
dost soften it with rain and blessest its
growth.*

See also Ps. 104^{13a}, and various other passages.

Further, in the Creation Epic a prominent element is the combat and victory of Marduk over Tiamat, the personification of the watery deep. This, too, we find in the psalms sung at this festival; but Yahweh is now represented as the Victor; thus, in Ps. 74¹²⁻¹⁴ it is said :

*But thou, O God,
Working triumph
Thou didst defeat
The heads of the monsters
Thou didst shatter
Gavest him as meat,*

*art my King for ever,
in the midst of the earth.
the sea by thy might,
didst crush on the waters ;
the heads of Leviathan,
as fodder to jackals.*

The theme appears in many other passages.

Then, finally, there was the formal procession which was an important part of the ceremony; and this, too, receives frequent mention in the psalms; one passage may be quoted, Ps. 68²⁴⁻²⁶:

*Behold ye the processions of Yahweh,
Thy processions, my God, my King, in the sanctuary;
The singers go before, the minstrels follow after,
In the midst are the maidens beating the timbrels.*

One more question suggested itself which we must seek briefly to answer: why did the psalmists embody eschatological material in the psalms sung at this festival? That such material does appear in the psalms in question needs no insisting on; but we shall give some illustrations. In Ps. 47²⁻⁸ it is said:

*For Yahweh, the Most High, is terrible,
A great King over all the earth,
He subdueth peoples under us, and nations under our feet . . .
For Yahweh is become King over all the earth, sing to God a choice-song,
Yahweh is become King over the nations, he sitteth upon his holy throne.*

Such words cannot conceivably refer to the present; after the prophetic style, the future is envisaged as present, as an act of faith; but the actual present is not referred to. What is in the psalmist's mind is the return of the primeval time of bliss at the end of the present world-order (see further on this Ps. 85, intr. section). Again, in Ps. 96, where "Yahweh is become King" occurs (v. 10), we read:

*. . . Yahweh, for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth;
He judgeth the world in righteousness, and the people in his faithfulness (v. 13).*

The Judgement is another of the outstanding events in the Eschatological Drama. In Ps. 97, which begins with "Yahweh is become King", apocalyptic *traits* occur in vv. 2-5. In Ps. 98⁹ the Judgement is again referred to. In Ps. 99, too, a condition is envisaged which is applicable only to the time when, at the end of the present world-order, Yahweh reigns in righteousness (vv. 3, 4):

*Let them praise his name, great and terrible, holy is he, and a mighty King;
Thou hast established equity in Jacob, justice and righteousness hast thou ordained.*

It is unnecessary to give further illustrations of the fact that in the psalms sung at the New Year Festival, *i.e.*, the Feast of Tabernacles, eschatological thought played a prominent part (see also 46⁶, 47²⁻⁹, 48⁴⁻⁸, 76⁴⁻¹², 149⁷⁻⁹).

Now, there must have been some special reason why the psalmists should have made such a point of bringing eschatological themes into the psalms written to be sung at the New Year Festival, celebrated at the Feast of Tabernacles, and especially at its opening ceremony of the Enthronement of Yahweh. As is to be expected, opinions differ here. Mowinckel explains it by saying that all that was originally expected to

happen during the coming year as the direct result of what was envisaged during the ritual of the annual celebration of Yahweh's Enthronement was assigned to an indefinite future time, as something that would ultimately come to pass when Yahweh finally ascended his throne for ever, when his enemies would be overcome and the Judgement take place, and when he would fulfil all the hopes and expectations of his people, and abide among them as the Light, and the eternal source of life. And he goes so far as to say that the entire Eschatological Drama originated in the ritual of what he calls the Festival of Yahweh's ascent upon his throne.¹ Needless to say that, with the evidence of the "ritual pattern" of Egypt and Babylonia before us, and for various other reasons which could be adduced, we disagree *in toto* with this view. Scarcely less astonishing is Hans Schmidt's contention that an eschatological interpretation of these psalms is out of the question.² On this view we refrain from commenting. The majority of scholars agree with Gunkel in recognizing the presence of eschatological thought in the psalms, whatever other elements they may contain. But in other directions we find ourselves unable to agree with Gunkel. We have already drawn attention to his view that the "Yahweh is become King" psalms were adaptations of secular songs composed in honour of the earthly king; in doing so, the psalmists, he goes on to say, "naturally thought of Israel as the dominion of Yahweh, and believed in a *present* kingdom of God. . . . But the contradiction between believing and seeing in the evil times of alien rule, led to the belief in a *future* kingdom of Yahweh."³ This belief, he holds, the psalmists took over from the prophets, and together with it their eschatological teaching.

In view of what has been said about the "ritual pattern" so frequently reflected in the psalms, it will be gathered that we can agree with this theory only in so far that the psalms in question must be understood in an eschatological sense. It may well be that the psalmists were influenced by prophetic teaching here; but not necessarily, and certainly not wholly. When one remembers the world-wide belief in the return of the "Golden Age", whether we think of it as embodied in the "ritual pattern" or whether we speak of it in the Hebrew form of the "Day of Yahweh", it is not a great stretch of the imagination to suppose that the psalmists were aware of the hope apart from anything contained in the prophetic writings. The general familiarity with it among the people, however misunderstood, is amply shown by what we read in, *e.g.*, Am. 5¹⁸⁻²⁰.

We have now attempted to answer the questions we set ourselves, though we fully realize that many points of detail have had to be left aside. There is so much to be said, and space is limited.

¹ *Psalmstudien*, ii, 226.

² *Die Thronfahrt* . . ., pp. 5 ff.

³ *Einleitung* . . ., p. 98.

A few words are, however, called for regarding the date of the type of psalms with which we have been dealing. It should first be remarked that there is reason to believe that they all belong to approximately the same period; but whatever that period may have been, the bulk of the material they contain goes back in origin to very early times. The celebration of the New Year Festival, for which the psalms in question were composed, was observed, in some form, long before the time of the monarchy; indeed, there is every reason to believe that soon after the settlement in Palestine, when the Israelites came under the influence of Canaanite worship, the celebration of this festival came into vogue among them. It follows, therefore, that so far as the references to the celebration of the Enthronement of Yahweh, and the other ceremonies connected with it, are concerned, the writers of the psalms in question utilized ancient material. Then, again, the large amount of eschatological detail contained in these psalms goes back in origin to earlier times. These considerations point to the fact that the New Year Festival psalms are adaptations of earlier forms; for that psalms had always been sung on this occasion there is no reason to doubt. From what has been said it might be gathered that we are contending for a very early date for these psalms; this, however, is not our purpose, so far as their *present form* is concerned; we have been referring only to the utilization of early material on the part of the writers of these psalms. Upon the whole, however, we should be inclined to suspect that these psalms have a pre-exilic basis, being adapted later to the simpler and purer *cultus*, which, as we may suppose, prevailed in the age when Israel's religion was dominated by "P". This may, moreover, be the reason for some of the metrical irregularities which appear in these psalms.

Some other facts have next to be considered.

The fact that prophetic utterances regarding the occurrences which are to take place at the end of the present world-order were laid under contribution by the writers of these psalms, in their present form, undoubtedly indicates the approximate time of their composition; but it must be remembered that, as just hinted, the material utilized by the prophets was of hoary antiquity. These psalms in their present form belonged, then, at any rate, to the post-prophetic period. Further, the marked indebtedness of the psalmists in question to the thought and diction of Deutero-Isaiah points to a post-exilic date for their composition as we now have them. But the post-exilic period extended to over five centuries prior to the beginning of the Christian era. The question, therefore, is whether there are any indications which may help towards a more definite time within this long period to which these psalms may be assigned. It must be confessed that such indications are few and uncertain. The psalms themselves

assume an elaborate resuscitation of the temple-worship such as is hardly likely to have taken place during the times of either Nehemiah or Ezra; this would imply a date for them about the middle of the fourth century B.C. On the other hand, there is absolutely nothing that points to a Maccabæan date of any of them. The apocalyptic literature with its *fully developed eschatology* began to take shape towards the end of the third century B.C.; so that our psalms are likely to be earlier than this; for although full of eschatological material, this is not so developed as in the eschatological literature proper. Again, the marked universalism of these psalms, though undoubtedly largely due to Deutero-Isaiah, is likely to have received a further impetus as a result of the spread of Greek influence. Upon the whole, therefore, it was during the early part of the Greek period, about 300 B.C., that these psalms, as we now have them, are most likely to have been written.

Something must be said, in conclusion, regarding the religious teaching in general contained in these psalms. There is, first, the religious significance of the myths from which the conception of the Kingship of Yahweh was derived. Myths, the pictorial embodiment of ideas and beliefs, were, in the early history of mankind, one of the normal methods accorded to man of divine self-revelation, so far as this could be apprehended by man in an undeveloped stage of culture. They must, therefore, be regarded as embodying the germs of living truths which, with the gradual development of the religious sense, approximated more and more to reality. The idea of the Kingship of Yahweh, derived from the Egyptian and Babylonian myths of the king-god, was the attribution to Yahweh of what to human ideas was the highest expression of power and authority; the king was supreme; therefore to attribute Kingship to Yahweh was to honour him to the utmost. But kingship assumes rule; at first the rule was over Israel, then it became world-wide dominion; and thus by degrees the steps led upward, reaching ultimately the Christian conception of the Kingdom of God. In these "Enthronement" psalms we see the process of development. Again, the frequent references in them, direct and implied, to the enmity between Yahweh and the waters of the sea, is the adaptation of the myth of Marduk's victory over Tiamat, the Great Deep, the personification of all harmfulness, to Yahweh. But his enemies are now the nations of the world who do not acknowledge him. What was originally merely harmfulness develops, with the growth of the religious sense, into wickedness. Yahweh overcomes his enemies, and they bow down before him in humble recognition of his supremacy.

Then, as to belief in Yahweh and the conceptions regarding him. There is no doubt that the most prominent feature here is his illimitable power, and that therefore praise and worship are due to him; the

reiterated call to praise him is unquestionably the most outstanding element in these psalms. On the other hand, an absolute monotheism is not taught; the references to other gods, though of deep inferiority to Yahweh, show that their existence was believed in; and therefore monotheism in the strict sense cannot be said to be taught in these psalms. In another direction, however, the conception of Yahweh is very exalted—namely, the emphasis laid on his ethical righteousness; this is constantly proclaimed among the peoples of the world, and it receives its highest expression in the pronouncement that he comes to judge the world in righteousness. From this it follows naturally that Yahweh's holiness should be insisted on, and if this is not often expressed, it is because such an attribute is taken for granted.

An universalistic outlook is prominent; where eschatological beliefs play so great a part this is to be expected. The absence of all mention of sacrifices will also be noted; the exhortation to "bring gifts" (96⁸) does not refer to sacrifices.

We hope that the various questions connected with the complicated subject of the Kingship of Yahweh have now been sufficiently dealt with.

CHAPTER VIII

SAINTS AND SINNERS IN THE PSALMS

THE large number of psalms in which antagonism between the righteous and their enemies is described, often in much detail, is common knowledge, for it is one of the most distinguishing marks occurring in the Psalter. In some cases it may well be that quarrels of the ordinary kind, common to mankind, form the subject-matter of the psalms in question. It is not this that we have in mind. We are thinking of cases in which, though antipathy between individuals may lurk, the kind of enmity expressed suggests something more deep-seated and extended than merely personal quarrels. We do not for a moment deny that in some of the psalms in question other elements than that with which we are particularly concerned may have entered in. Thus, Mowinckel's very ingenious arguments in support of his theory that the enemies of the saints were magicians are full of interest; and the illustrative Babylonian material adduced in support is distinctly impressive. That there is an element of truth in his contention we would not deny; but we cannot get away from the conviction that Mowinckel over-estimates the presence of magical elements. The subject is dealt with in his *Psalmstudien* I (1921). Of much interest also is Nicolsky's *Spuren magischer Formeln in den Psalmen* (1927).

The frequent mention of antagonism between the righteous and their enemies gives the impression that the strife between the two was of a permanent, or at least recurrent, character, and recorded a condition of rift within the community which was fundamental in its nature. To discover the cause, or causes, of this state of affairs is a complicated matter, and involves some investigation into the history of the nation during more than one period. Our first task must be to examine the terms applied, respectively, to those between whom this state of conflict endured; but it will be understood that the terms are not necessarily always employed, the allusion being sufficiently clear without them.

i. *Hasid*,¹ plur. *Hasidim*: "godly one", "godly ones" (E.VV.

¹ From the root meaning "to be kind", which is, however, used only in a reflexive sense, "to show oneself kind". The noun, *hesed*, with which it is connected, has various meanings, according to the context, "kindness", "mercy", "love", "piety". The adjectival form, i.e., that under consideration, *Hasid*, is passive in idea, as though in reference to the recipient of mercies; but its usage shows that it is active *in sense*, in reference to one who is zealous in his practice of devotion to God, pious, or saintly, and who thereby shows his love for God; hence our rendering of "godly one", for *Hasid*, in preference to "saint", which has come to have a somewhat different connotation.

"saints"). It is important to note that the mention of antagonism between the God-fearing and the wicked is not confined to the *Psalms*; it is referred to, *e.g.*, in Mal. 3¹³⁻¹⁶; and that it existed in pre-exilic times can be seen by such passages as Jer. 12¹⁻³, Zeph. 2¹⁻³. It must also be noted that these terms *Ḥasid*, *Ḥasidim* are likewise not confined to the *Psalms*, though they occur there far more frequently than in other books. Thus, in Mic. 7², *e.g.*, it is said: "The godly man (*Ḥasid*) is perished out of the land, and there is none upright among men"; see also 2 Chron. 6⁴¹, Prov. 2⁸; and the expressions "men of *ḥesed*" (Isa. 57¹), "man of *ḥesed*" (Prov. 11¹⁷), connote much the same idea. Again, it must be observed that in the *Psalms* themselves *Ḥasid* is not always used in a restricted sense; in 145¹⁷ it is applied to Yahweh (the same is found in Jer. 3¹²), and in 89¹⁹ to the prophet Nathan. Further, there are some passages in which these terms are used in a general sense, not necessarily in reference to a particular body of men; thus, in 32⁶ it is said: "Let everyone that is godly (*Ḥasid*) pray unto thee"; that applies to anyone in the community; similarly in 79², "thy godly ones" and "thy servants" are parallel; it can hardly be contended that the "servants" of God applies only to a restricted body; again, in 85⁸ "his godly ones" is parallel to "his people"; clearly the term is used in a general sense here; so, too, in 148¹⁴ "all his godly ones" is parallel to "his people"; instructive, too, is 139⁹, where "his priests" and "his godly ones" are parallel; it is not to be supposed that the latter were confined to the priesthood; nor could this be the case if the term were used in a restricted sense in this passage. Finally, there is the unusual expression, in 43¹, a "nation not-godly". In all these passages, then—and there may be some others—*Ḥasid*, or *Ḥasidim*, are used in a general sense.

But there are, on the other hand, a larger number of passages in which these terms are used in a restricted sense as applying to a particular body of men, or, as we should say, a party or sect; for in these passages, which deal with the antagonism between the "godly ones" and their enemies, it is not simply a question of quarrels, and the like, that arise between individuals in the ordinary vicissitudes of life; the expressions used, and the procedure described, point to party strife. This will be best illustrated by examining the characteristics of the "godly ones", and then by noting the type of men who are their enemies, and the methods used by the latter in their attacks upon their victims.

The *religious* character of the *Ḥasid*, whether applied by the psalmist to himself, or as representing the body of the "godly ones", may be briefly set forth as follows: although, as we have seen, there are certain passages in which "thy godly ones", or "his (Yahweh's) godly ones", are evidently used in a general sense, there are others, and more in number, in which this use of the possessive pronoun indicates those who

are marked off from the generality of their fellows; and this suggests a body, or party, characterized by special devotion to God. This is further illustrated by descriptive epithets applied to the *Hasid*; he is spoken of as "righteous" (e.g., 7⁹, 113⁵); similarly as "upright of heart" (e.g., 164¹⁰, cp. 14⁵); he is "perfect", a term meaning innocence from all evil (e.g., 18²³, 37¹⁸, 64⁴); and various other epithets of a like import are applied to him. So that the *Hasid* is one whose outstanding characteristic is loyalty to Yahweh.

Then, as to *Hasid* and *Hasidim* being used in the restricted sense of adherents to a party. It is true that "thy godly ones" is sometimes used, as we have seen, in a general sense; but in certain passages in which this expression occurs the context points to its use in a more restricted sense. Thus, in 52⁹ the psalmist says: "I will declare [emended text] thy name, for it is good, in the presence of thy godly ones"; the words "in the presence of thy godly ones" suggest a gathering of a particular kind. Again, in 50⁵ it is said: "Gather my godly ones together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice". Suggestive also is the mention of "the assembly of the godly ones" in 149¹, which quite evidently refers to an exclusive gathering. And there are a number of other passages from which the impression is gained that the *Hasidim* were a compact body standing aloof not only from those who were avowedly the enemies of religion, but also distinctive as compared with their own people generally.

To sum up, then: the terms *Hasid* and *Hasidim* are not confined to the *Psalms*, though used there more frequently than elsewhere. In the *Psalms* the term *Hasidim* is sometimes used in a general sense applying to all those who acknowledge God and worship him; but more frequently it is used in a restricted sense denoting a special body of the godly in the community. In this latter use the outstanding characteristic of the *Hasidim* is their very devoted and strict loyalty to Yahweh, and ardent observance of his commandments; so that they are religious in a more definite and fuller sense than others.

ii. 'Ebyon, 'Aniy, 'Anaw: these three terms, meaning respectively "poor", "downtrodden", "humble" (the last two sometimes confused together), are referred to because they are applied to the *Hasidim* in a number of passages. A few of these may be given by way of illustration. In 86¹² the psalmist, speaking of himself, but as representing others too, says: "I am poor and downtrodden, preserve my soul, for I am a godly one [*Hasid*]", cp. 40¹⁷, 70⁵, 109²²; in 109¹⁶ it is said that the wicked man "persecuted the downtrodden and the poor man"; similarly in 37¹⁴: "The wicked have drawn out the sword and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and the downtrodden". They are, however, spoken of as being specially under Yahweh's care, and are thus to be identified with the godly; in 35¹⁰ it is said that Yahweh

"delivereth the downtrodden from him that is too strong for him, and the poor from him that spoileth him"; see, too, 140¹³; and again in 9¹⁸: "For the poor shall not always be forgotten, nor the hope of the humble perish for ever". The usage in general of these terms shows them to refer to the humbler classes (*e.g.*, Isa. 3^{14, 15}, 10², Am. 2⁷), and this applies, as a rule, to their use in the *Psalms*, though in some cases it may well be that no social distinction is intended.

iii. *Raša'*, plur. *Rēša'im*: "wicked man", "wicked ones". We have taken those terms as those used in reference to the enemies of the *Ḥasidim* because they are the ones which occur most frequently, but others occur¹; 'Oyeb, "enemy", or "foe", is also often used, and there are various other terms applied to them. In order to get some idea of the characteristics of these enemies, and of their methods of attack upon the *Ḥasidim*, it will be necessary to give some quotations. It must be noted first, that, as in the case of *Ḥasidim*, the "wicked" are referred to both in a general sense and in a more restricted sense; in this latter they seem to be thought of as forming a special body in the community. For the former we have, *e.g.*, 7^{8, 9}, where the wicked are spoken of quite generally, being mentioned in the same context as "the peoples"; similarly in 9¹⁷: "Let the wicked turn away to Sheol, all the nations that forget God" (see also 11^{5, 6}, 58^{1a}, where the wicked are spoken of generally as "the sons of men"); in 73¹⁻¹², again, the wicked in general are spoken of; it is unnecessary to give further references. On the other hand, various passages deal with the wicked in a way which points to their being a particular body of men. A clear instance is 1¹: "Happy is the man that walketh not in the counsel [*i.e.* advice] of the wicked . . . nor sitteth in the seat [or circle] of scorners"; a somewhat similar thought occurs in 64², where the "secret counsel" of evil-doers is mentioned; that must refer to some special gathering, not to the wicked in general. In the same way, when in 86¹⁴ the phrase "the assembly of violent men" occurs, this can hardly be understood in a general sense. There are many other passages to the same effect. So that, as in the case of the *Ḥasidim*, so too in that of the *Rēša'im*, the term is used sometimes in a general, at other times in a restricted, sense. We realize that to any careful reader of the *Psalms* this is self-evident; but there is a special reason for drawing attention to the fact, as will be seen. Our next point must be to describe the character of the "wicked" as portrayed in the *Psalms*, and to observe their methods of attack against the "godly". These methods are of two kinds, and that fact is, perhaps not without significance. There is, first, frequent mention of verbal vituperation; the forms of abuse and accusation are bitter, deceitful, and untruthful: "they have whet their tongue like a sword, they have

¹ Strictly speaking, the opposite to *Raša'* is *Ṣaddiq*, "righteous".

sharpened like arrows bitter speech " (64³); in metaphorical speech they are said to hide a snare, to spread a net, to set gins (140⁵, 64³); they speak lies and are deceitful (5⁶, 120²), adder's poison is under their lips (140³). But their mode of attack is not confined to slander and lying; they are accused further of using physical violence. Thus, in 86¹⁴ they are referred to as "violent men" (cp. 140^{1, 4}); their type is spoken of as being "like a lion that is greedy of his prey, as it were a young lion lurking in secret places" (17¹²); they are described as bloodthirsty and murderous (5⁶, 55²³); "in the covert places doth he murder the innocent" (10⁸; cp. 14⁴). Fully in accordance with this it is to be noted that they are the enemies of God as well as of men; thus, in 10^{3, 4} it is said: "He revileth Yahweh", "all his thoughts are, There is no God"; in 14¹, 53¹: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God"; in 37²⁰ they are spoken of as "the enemies of Yahweh"; so, too, in 68¹, where it is also said that they "hate" God. Their irreligious character is thus clear. One more thing to be noted about them is that they belong to the higher grades of society; their being spoken of as "the haughty ones" (86¹⁴), and "the proud ones" (140⁵, cp. 94²) points to this; in 101⁵ the man that has "an high look and an arrogant mind" must evidently belong to the upper classes; this is implied, too, in 82², where those are blamed who "respect the persons of the wicked"; and that they are spoken of as having riches and being in prosperity (73^{3, 12}) similarly shows that they belong to wealthy circles.

The opponents of the *Hasidim* are thus slanderous in their accusations, violent in their attacks, irreligious, and they belong to the powerful and wealthy circles among the people.

Our next task must be to consider the question of the causes which led to the enmity between the *Hasidim* and the *R'sa'im*; for this purpose it will be necessary to glance at the history during three periods.

i. THE PRE-EXILIC PERIOD.

We have seen that in the *Psalms* both these terms are used now in a general, now in a restricted, sense, and that the antagonism between the two was due both to religious and social causes. Now the prophetic books make it abundantly clear that already in the eighth century, and indeed earlier, the prophets championed a pure Yahweh-worship as against the syncretistic tendencies of the mass of the people arising from the influences of Canaanite religion. That the prophets had their special following, though composed of a small minority, needs no insisting on (see, e.g., 1 Kgs. 18¹³, 19¹⁸, Isa. 1⁹, Am. 3¹², 5^{3, 15}). Thus the causes of differences of religious outlook go back to times long before the Exile. Further, a very cursory reading

of the prophetic books shows that a wide separation existed between the powerful rich and the helpless poor; the latter were frequently the victims of cruel maltreatment (see, *e.g.*, Isa. 3^{14, 15}, 32^{6, 7}, Jer. 2³⁴, Am. 2^{6, 7}, 4¹, 5^{11, 12}, 8⁶); but they are spoken of as those for whom God cares, *i.e.*, those who were faithful to him (*e.g.*, Isa. 11⁴, 29¹⁹, Jer. 20¹³). So that social as well as religious differences existed in pre-exilic times. It follows, therefore, that the use, in the *Psalms*, of the terms *Ḥasidim* and *Rēša'im* in a general sense can be readily understood, for religious and social differences among the people had existed long before causes arose which led to the formation of parties, in reference to which the terms are used in the restricted sense.

But attention must now be drawn to another cause of division among the people, a religious-political one, which played an important part in the ultimate formation of parties. This may, or may not, have been in the minds of some of the psalmists; direct evidence does certainly not appear; but it is highly probable that they refer to it implicitly. The matter is a somewhat complicated one, but the bare outline of the argument will suffice for our present purpose.¹ It is clear that the official priesthood centred in the house of Zadok (2 Sam. 8¹⁷, 15²⁴, 19¹¹, 20²⁵, 1 Kgs. 1^{34, 39}); but long before that time the priestly functions were exercised by the house of Ithamar, who was descended from Aaron (Exod. 6²³, 28¹, Num. 3²⁻⁴, 1 Chron. 6³ [5²⁹] 24¹⁻⁶)²; the Zadokites, therefore, displaced the Ithamar priesthood from the position of precedence; and they introduced certain changes, while their rivals clung to ancient usage. The earliest echoes of these changes, it is true, are not heard of till much later times (*e.g.*, contrast Lev. 21¹⁴ with Ezek. 44²²)³; but such echoes are sufficient to prove earlier existing differences. At any rate, the main point is that the upholders of ancient tradition were overborne by the innovators; this, in the nature of things, brought about, if not the formation of parties, at any rate opposed points of view. In this connexion Jer. 6¹⁶⁻²⁰ is very instructive; it bears witness to the existence of these tendencies: "Thus saith Yahweh, stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls; but they said, We will not walk therein. And I set watchmen over you, (saying), Harken to the sound of the trumpet; but they said, We will not hearken. Therefore hear, ye peoples, ye shepherds of the flocks.⁴ Hear, O earth: Behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto

¹ For details see Aptowitz, *Parteipolitik der Hasmonäerzeit* . . ., pp. xxii ff. (1927).

² See further, Desnoyers, *Histoire de Peuple Hébreu*, III, 212 ff. (1930).

³ Aptowitz, *Spuren des Matriarchats im jüdischen Schrifttum*, Exkurs v, "Endogamie" (in Hebrew Union College Annual V).

⁴ Following the Septuagint.

my words ; and as for my law, they have rejected it. To what purpose cometh there to me frankincense from Sheba, and the sweet calamus from a far country? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices pleasing unto me." Here we must quote Skinner's excellent comment on the prophet's words: "Two methods he had tried in vain. He had appealed to the conservative principle which is essential to sound religious development. He had called the people to pause and consider the diverse tendencies of their age, and to follow that which was in harmony with the historic faith of Israel. The 'old paths' are the genuine ethical principles of the Mosaic revelation embodied in the traditional *Tôrâ* or teaching of Yahweh (*v.* 19). These are contrasted with the new-fangled costly refinements in cultus—'frankincense from Sheba,' and 'sweet calamus from a far country'—through which their new spiritual guides held out the delusive promise of peace of mind . . . the second method was 'the sound of the trumpet'—the warnings of providence interpreted by prophecy. To both appeals the people had turned a deaf ear, and their refusal is accepted as final: judgement can no longer be averted (*vv.* 18 f.)." ¹ Of the attitude of the people in general we have no indications, but that in course of time they took sides is shown by the subsequent history.

ii. THE EXILIC AND POST-EXILIC PERIODS.

Our sources give unmistakable evidence of the fact that during the Exile the priestly circles cultivated an intensive study of the Scriptures, and especially those parts in which the Law was set forth. The presence of prophetic influence is equally in evidence; Ezekiel at the beginning and Deutero-Isaiah towards the end of the Exile, are sufficient guarantee of this. The religion of Yahweh was, therefore, preserved and taught during the Exile by both priest and prophet. But there are indubitable signs of the existence of a very different tendency among some of the exiles; one cannot read such passages as Ezek. 14¹⁻⁸, Isa. 40¹⁸⁻²⁵, 42¹⁷, 44⁹⁻²⁰ without recognizing that the ancestral religion had lost its hold upon many who were dazzled by the gorgeous displays and impressive ritual of Babylonian worship. This cannot have failed to bring about a great cleavage among the Jewish exiles, the echoes of which, as well as its continuance, may be heard in such passages as Zeph. 2¹⁻³, Mal. 3¹³⁻¹⁸. A cleavage brought about by such a cause as this was justified and righteous; but, unfortunately, the subsequent history shows that the germs of a cleavage of a different character were also at work.

The records which deal with the earlier period after the return from the Exile are somewhat confused and contradictory. It is evident

¹ *Prophecy and Religion, Studies in the Life of Jeremiah*, pp. 116 f. (1922).

that passages which reflect the conditions of later times have been inserted in the text of the books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, thereby somewhat obscuring things. Nevertheless, two important facts emerge clearly enough: the first is that the High-priesthood was still Zadokite (Zech. 3¹⁻¹⁰ 6¹¹, "Joshua, the son of Jehozadak the high-priest," see also 1 Esdras 5⁴⁸); and the second is that a section of the people was entirely out of sympathy with the high-priestly party (Ezra 10¹ Neh. 13^{4a} 10^a); and they were strengthened in their opposition by both Nehemiah and Ezra on account of the marriages contracted by members of that party with non-Israelite women (Ezra 9¹⁻⁴); the sons of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, are specifically mentioned (Ezra 10¹⁸). It is said in Ezra 9² that "the hand of the princes and rulers hath been prominent in this trespass"; that is to say, that what we may describe as the "upper classes" and their following were entirely in favour of this. Thus, we have a continuation of much the same conditions as had obtained in earlier times: the Zadokites, supported by the wealthier classes, on the one hand; and those who clung to the older traditions, on the other. As to these latter, it is of importance to note that "the sons of Ithamar" are mentioned among those "who went up" with Ezra "from Babylon" (Ezra. 8¹). Of the antagonism between the two sections within the community during the century or so after the Exile there is sufficient evidence (Isa. 57²⁰, 58⁹, 59¹⁻¹⁵, Mal. 2¹⁴⁻¹⁶, 3⁷⁻⁴⁶ [3²⁴ in Hebr.]).

iii. THE GREEK PERIOD.

During this period the rift between the upholders of traditional orthodoxy and their opponents became intensified. The reasons for this may be briefly indicated. One of the results of Alexander's conquests was a large intermingling of peoples. Important in the present connexion is the fact that the fall of the Persian Empire resulted in the emigration of many Jews from Persia to the west, where they settled down in Greek centres of civilization. We have evidence showing that, before long, communities of Jews were to be found in almost every part of the civilized world.¹ That Greek cities arose in Palestine, which contained a considerable Jewish element, during the third century B.C. is well known.² The result being that there was a direct contact of the Jews with Greek-speaking peoples, Greek thought, culture, customs, and, above all, with Greek religious ideas; this could not fail to affect the Jews in a variety of ways. In these circumstances we must recall what has been said above about the opposition

¹ Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes* . . . , III, 12 ff., where many references to authorities will be found.

² Alexander himself settled Macedonians in Samaria; see further, Tarn, *Hellenistic Civilization*, pp. 73-116, 129 ff. (1930).

between those who walked in the old paths and those who were affected by extraneous religious beliefs. Politically, too, the advent of Hellenism, with its founding of new cities and the transformation of older ones, must have resulted in a changed outlook among the Jews. "Wherever Hellenism penetrated, and especially on the Philistine coast and the eastern boundaries of Palestine beyond Jordan, the country districts were grouped around single large cities as their political centres. Each of such communities formed a comparatively independent whole, managing its own internal affairs; its dependence upon the rulers, whether of Egypt, or, later, of Syria, consisted only in the recognition of their military supremacy, the payment of taxes, and certain other performances. At the head of such a hellenistically organized community was a democratic senate of several hundred members.¹ It cannot be doubted that the organization on Greek models of the local government of Jewish cities must have brought a new mental outlook to the Jews.' ² It needs no insisting upon that these conditions offered ample scope for political quarrels, with all the bitterness of spirit engendered thereby.

We have, thus, in Israel from pre-exilic times until well into the Greek period causes of religious and political feuds; and we contend that these are reflected in those psalms in which the antagonism between the *Hasidim* and the *Rēša'im* finds expression. The intermingling of religious and political strife is too obvious to need emphasizing. That numbers among the poorer classes to whom the religion of their forefathers was their most precious possession, should often have been victims of the more powerful, cannot cause surprise.

But to follow out to its bitter end the story of the antagonism of those designated under the comprehensive terms *Hasidim* and *Rēša'im* it will be necessary to say something about a later part of the Greek period.

The breach between sections of the people to which attention has been drawn is now seen to be more pronounced than ever; for the all-pervading spirit of Hellenism had exercised its fascination on large numbers of the Jews, whose adherence to the faith of their fathers had, in consequence, become weaker and weaker. Opposed to them were those who clung with ever-greater tenacity to traditional belief and practice. These two sections corresponded, in general, to those of earlier days: the High-priesthood with its following, supported by the more influential and wealthy classes, as against the larger numbers of ordinary folk, led by the guardians of the faith as handed down. It is important, however, to note that the hellenizing elements among the people existed before the attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes was made

¹ Cp. Schürer, *op. cit.*, II, 95.

² Oesterley and Robinson, *A History of Israel*, II, 180 (1934).

to stamp out Judaism altogether, an attempt which brought about the Maccabæan revolt. A very significant passage in the first book of *Maccabees* brings this out with ominous clarity: "In those days", it is said, "came there forth out of Israel transgressors of the law, and persuaded many, saying, Let us go and make a covenant with the Gentiles that are round about us; for since we were parted from them many evils have befallen us. And the saying was good in their eyes. And certain of the people were forward herein, and went to the king; and he gave them authority to act in accordance with the customs of the Gentiles. And they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem according to the usage of the Gentiles. And they made themselves uncircumcised, and forsook the holy covenant, and joined themselves to the Gentiles, and sold themselves to do evil" (1¹¹⁻¹⁵). Nothing could be clearer than this; we would only stress one point; the words, "for since we parted from them", *i.e.*, the Gentiles, show that the "making of a covenant" with them was nothing new; in other words, we have here a continuation of what had taken place in earlier days.

The only other point to which it is necessary to draw attention in the present connexion is the further mention of the *Ḥasidim*. It is after the first catastrophe had befallen those who remained true to their faith that we hear of the *Ḥasidim*: "Then were gathered unto them a company of Asidæans [this is the Greek form of the term], mighty men of Israel, every one that offered himself willingly for the law. And all they that fled from the evils were added to them, and became a stay unto them" (1 Macc. 2^{42, 43}). Here it is to be noted that the way in which mention of the *Ḥasidim* is made, without a word of explanation as to who they were, shows plainly enough that the name was familiar; in other words, they had formed a party within the Jewish community long before Maccabæan times; for the formation of a party, separate and distinct from those of their surroundings, takes time. The passage shows us, further, that though the *Ḥasidim* were men of special piety who offered themselves willingly for the law, yet outside of their ranks there were plenty of faithful Jews who were bitterly opposed to those of their race who had "joined themselves to the Gentiles, and sold themselves to do evil". The *Ḥasidim* are mentioned again in 1 Macc. 7¹³⁻¹⁷, where it is recorded that sixty of them were slaughtered, and Ps. 79^{2c, 3} is quoted as prophetic of this (a point apparently overlooked by those who regard this psalm as Maccabæan!); the way in which it is quoted is significant; the quotation is almost verbal, but not quite, suggesting that the psalm was, more or less, known by heart, and not copied out by the writer; a *general* familiarity would point to long-continued use. Their religious ardour and patriotism are again referred to in 2 Macc. 14⁶⁻⁸.

For our present purpose it is unnecessary to follow out the history

further ; it need only be added that ultimately the Zadokites and the *Ḥasidim* became, respectively, the parties of the Sadducees and the Pharisees.

It is, now, in the light of what has been said that all that we read about the *Ḥasidim* in the *Psalms* must be studied.

CHAPTER IX

THE QUESTION OF MACCABÆAN PSALMS

THE majority of commentators hold that a certain number of psalms belong to the Maccabæan period; as to how many are to be assigned to this late date, opinions differ; the minimum number is four—viz., 44, 74, 79, 83. We desire to offer some considerations which, we do not say definitely disprove a Maccabæan date for any psalms, but which suggest that such a date is improbable.

Without going into too much detail, we may begin by mentioning some reasons why many scholars assign a Maccabæan date to these four psalms; with others it does not seem necessary to deal. With regard to Ps. 44, it is held that what is said in *vv.* 17, 18 (18, 19) could be true only of Maccabæan times: . . . *yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant: our heart is not turned backward, nor our step declined from thy way.* This is said in reference to the *nation*, see *vv.* 5 (6), 9 (10); but in view of 1 Macc. 1¹¹⁻¹⁵, how could these words refer to Maccabæan times? It illustrates the danger of picking out verses for a particular purpose without taking the context into consideration. Again, *v.* 22 (23) is confidently explained as referring to the religious persecution which caused the Maccabæan uprising: *For thy sake we are slain all the day, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.* Anyone reading 1 Macc. 1²⁹⁻⁶³, which gives the account of what this persecution really meant, cannot but feel that if this is what the psalmist was referring to, he must have been strangely lacking in the sense of proportion. That a persecution is being referred to in the psalm in question is certain, but not one on the scale of the Jewish-Syrian one, in which Jews had taken the initiative (see 1 Macc. 1¹¹⁻³⁴). There are some other passages in this psalm which make a Maccabæan date practically impossible (see the Intr. to this psalm, p. 244 f.).

Coming next to Ps. 74; a superficial comparison between *vv.* 3-9 of this psalm and 1 Macc. 1³⁸, 2 Macc. 1⁸, suggests the possibility of the same event being referred to in each; but as soon as details are considered, it is seen that this is unlikely to be the case. In *v.* 3 the destruction of the temple is described; it is in *perpetual ruins*; and *v.* 7 says: *They have set thy sanctuary on fire.* This does not agree with what is said about the attack on the temple in Maccabæan times; so far from its being in perpetual ruins, the only parts that were actually destroyed

were the "priests' chambers" (1 Macc. 4³⁸); in the account of its re-dedication, nothing is said about its having been rebuilt. Again, so far from its having been set on fire, only the gates were burned (1 Macc. 4³⁸, 2 Macc. 1⁸, 8³³). But the most convincing argument against the contention that both accounts refer to the same event is that in the psalm the crowning horror of the whole tragedy, the building of "an abomination of desolation upon the altar", is never even hinted at. That omission would be quite incomprehensible if the Maccabæan tragedy were being referred to. Once more, it is held by some commentators that *mô'ādēy-ēl*, "appointed times (or assemblies) of God" (v. 8), means "synagogues", and that, therefore, Maccabæan times must be referred to—we confess that we cannot follow the argument—the expression cannot, however, refer to synagogues; *mô'ēd* is an abstract noun; the earliest name for "the synagogue" is *ha-Keneseth*. Moreover, all the evidence shows that synagogues did not exist in Palestine as early as Maccabæan times; the archæological evidence on this point is quite convincing.¹

Another argument supposed to be in favour of a Maccabæan date for Ps. 74 is that in v. 9 it is said: *There is no more any prophet*; this would certainly apply to Maccabæan times (see 1 Macc. 4⁴⁶, 9²⁷, 14³¹), but it would apply equally to most of the post-exilic period. Ps. 79 contains some passages (vv. 1-4) which appear at first sight to be distinctly reminiscent of Maccabæan times (see 1 Macc. 1²⁹⁻³⁹, 46, 2⁷, and 2 Macc. 8²⁻⁴); but two facts must be pointed to which are fatal to a Maccabæan date. If this psalm had been written at that time, is it conceivable that it should be absolutely silent on the prime and central cause of the Maccabæan rising—the attempt to crush out the religion of the Jews? There is no need to stress the obvious fact that to the psalmists religion was all-absorbing. The silence of the deeply religious writer of our psalm (see vv. 8, 9, 13) regarding this attempt makes it quite certain that he cannot have written it in reference to the Maccabæan struggle. The other fact has already been referred to—viz., that this psalm was quoted as a prophecy by the writer of 1 Maccabees (7¹⁷).

Lastly, we come to Ps. 83. We confess that we find it difficult to take seriously the contention that this psalm is Maccabæan. The idea arose owing to the parallelism between vv. 3, 4 (4, 5) of our psalm and 1 Macc. 5²; in the former it is said: *They take crafty counsel against thy people, and consult together against thy treasure (or "treasured ones")*. *They have said, Come and let us cut them off from being a nation*; ² *that the name of Israel be no more in remembrance*. The

¹ See Sukenik, *Ancient Synagogues in Palestine and Greece*, especially chap. I (1934).

² This is a quotation from Jer. 48².

latter runs: "And they took counsel to destroy the race of Jacob that was in the midst of them, and they began to slay and destroy among the people". We have here another illustration of the precariousness of cutting off verses from their context, and of explaining them without taking the context into consideration. In the psalm the context contains the names of Israel's enemies, among them Assyria (*vv.* 6-8 (7-9)), and God is called upon to destroy them (*vv.* 13-17 (14-18)); but there is not a hint of these enemies having all been defeated. On the other hand, 1 Macc. 5³⁻⁶⁸ is a long and detailed account of the victories of Judas Maccabæus: "And the man Judas and his brethren were glorified exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and of all the Gentiles, whosoever their name was heard of; and men gathered together unto them, acclaiming them" (*vv.* 63, 64). How, in view of this fundamental difference in the conditions described in these two writings, respectively, can it be contended that they refer to the same series of events?

We hope, therefore, that we may claim to have shown that there are reasons for doubting a Maccabæan date for these four psalms. We must, however, add some further general considerations, which will tend to show the improbability of *any* of the psalms in the Psalter having been written as late as the Maccabæan period.

Mention has already been made of the fact that hellenizing tendencies, which find expression in various psalms, do not necessarily point to a Maccabæan date, since hellenistic influences had been exercised among the Jews long before that time. Similarly with regard to the *Ḥasidim*, the mention of whom in some psalms and in 1 *Maccabees* is thought to mark a point of contact between the two; we have already shown that the way in which they are spoken of in the latter implies that they had been long in existence; so that the psalms in question cannot on this ground be claimed as of Maccabæan date.

The persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes began in 167 B.C., and the desecration of the temple took place in December of that year. The re-dedication of the temple was celebrated in December 164 B.C.¹ The fighting that went on during the intervening time was by no means unfavourable for the Jews. But it was during these years that "Maccabæan" psalms must have been written, most probably during the year 166 B.C., for the Jewish successes which almost uniformly marked the subsequent years would not have offered any *raison d'être* for the composition of the psalms in question. On the supposition of their having been written some time during the earlier part of this period, they could not have been used in the wor-

¹ For these dates see the very careful work of Kolbe, *Beiträge zur syrischen und jüdischen Geschichte*, pp. 95 ff. (1926).

ship of the temple (see, e.g., 1 Mac. 3^{35, 36, 45}); this could have taken place only after the re-dedication of the temple. Now, the question which we have to ask ourselves is this: Is it likely that psalms of the sorrowful and despairing nature of the "Maccabæan" ones would have been used in the worship of the temple at any time during the succeeding half-century, a period of frequent Jewish triumphs? We fail to see *when* these psalms could have been used. If, on the other hand, the psalms in question had for long been incorporated in the national hymn-book, continued use would have brought them within the same category as many another psalm of similar type, plaintive, penitential, and the like, for which no Maccabæan date is claimed.

Another question, arising out of the foregoing, suggests itself. Seeing that, but for the first few months or so, the Maccabæan period was one of the most glorious in Jewish history, how comes it that, on the assumption of "Maccabæan" psalms, these should all be of a mournful character, and none of a jubilant tone? That, however, by the way.

An argument, of a different character, against the existence of any Maccabæan psalms must now be put forth. It will not be denied that the earliest possible date for any "Maccabæan" psalm is 167 B.C. The question then arises: Would any new psalms have been admitted into the temple hymn-book as late as this? Though no certain answer can be given to this question, two matters deserve to be mentioned which bear upon it. In the Prologue to *Ecclesiasticus* in Greek, the writer (in 132 B.C.) says that his grandfather (Ben-Sira, living about 200 B.C. or a little later) had "much given himself to the reading of the law, and the prophets, and the other books of our fathers"; and later on he again refers to "the law and the prophets, and the rest of the books" studied by his grandfather. While there is no question here of a Canon of Scripture in the later sense, the phrases used certainly point to the existence of three definitely recognized bodies of religious literature of an authoritative character about 200 B.C. This is confirmed, so far as the *Psalms* are concerned, by what Ben-Sira himself says about David: "In all his doings he gave thanks unto God Most High with words of glory; with his whole heart he loved his Maker, and sang praise every day continually. Stringed instruments and song before the altar he ordained, to make sweet melody with their music. He gave comeliness to the feasts, and set in order the seasons to perfection, while they praised his holy name; before morning it resounded from the sanctuary" (Ecclus. 47⁸⁻¹⁰). What is here said gives, we submit, the impression that the book of *Psalms* was by that time completed. The Law (*i.e.*, the five books of Moses), for reasons into which it is not necessary to enter here, and the *Psalms*, because of their sacred use in worship, occupied positions of special sanctity.

The second matter, though belonging to somewhat later times, has a bearing on the present discussion because of the conception held as to what constituted "canonicity". Josephus writes (*Contra Ap.* 38-41): "We have not myriads of books disagreeing with, and antagonistic to, one another, but two and twenty only,¹ which contain the record of all time (past), and are rightly believed in.² And of these five belong to Moses. . . . From the death of Moses till the reign of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, who reigned after Xerxes, the prophets who came after Moses wrote down the things that were done during their time in thirteen books. The remaining four contain hymns to God, and precepts for men's conduct of life. But from Artaxerxes to our times all events have, it is true, been written down; but these later books are not thought to be worthy of the same credit, because the exact succession of prophets was wanting." The main point here is that no authoritative book of Scripture was written after the time of Artaxerxes I (464-424 B.C.), the "prophetical period". This was a theory, quite artificial, but it was also the early Rabbinical view, or approximately so; for they, too, held that the true books of Scripture were written within the "prophetical period"; for them this period was from Moses to Ezra.³ With the reasons for framing this, manifestly erroneous, theory we are not here concerned. We mention it because stress is laid in 1 *Maccabees* on the absence of a prophet; in 4⁴⁵⁻⁴⁶ it is said that "they pulled down the altar, and laid up the stones in the mountain of the house in a convenient place, until there should come a prophet to give an answer concerning them". In 9²⁷ we read: "And there was great tribulation in Israel, such as was not since the time that no prophet appeared unto them". And, again, in 14⁴¹: ". . . the Jews and the priests were well pleased that Simon should be their leader and high priest for ever (*i.e.*, in his house) until there should arise a faithful prophet". If, according to the writer of 1 *Maccabees*, this was a period during which there was no prophet, and therefore no prophetical writings, is there not some justification for thinking that the same would apply to psalmists and psalms?

Another argument against the existence of "Maccabæan" psalms has been dealt with by Bittenwieser⁴—namely, "the passing of Hebrew as a spoken language in post-exilic times, and its gradual replacement by Aramaic". He maintains that the literary perfection of those psalms held by many scholars to belong to Maccabæan times is such that they must have been written while Hebrew literature was

¹ Josephus reckons *Ruth* and *Lamentations* as belonging, respectively, to *Judges* and *Jeremiah*.

² The addition of "as divine" is probably a later addition.

³ For details, see Hölischer, *Kanonisch und Apokryph*, pp. 36 (1905).

⁴ *The Psalms*, pp. 10 ff. (1938).

still at its height; that, presumably, was at any rate prior to the second century B.C. The argument, it is true, is not conclusive; Bittenwieser's criticism of Ben-Sira's Hebrew is a little over-stated, and it is certain that the Hebrew manuscripts of *Ecclesiasticus* have suffered much corruption. If we had the Hebrew originals of 2 (4) *Esdras* (the main part), and of the books of *Tobit*, *Judith*, 1 *Maccabees*, and, above all, of the *Psalms of Solomon*,¹ we should be in a better position to judge of the literary Hebrew of post-Biblical writings. Nevertheless, what Bittenwieser says offers a further argument against the "Maccabæan" psalms contention.

One, final, point. There is a consensus of opinion among commentators that a number of collections of psalms are incorporated in the Psalter. In many instances the collection to which a psalm belonged is indicated in the title. Twelve belonged to the Asaph collection, according to the titles both in Hebrew and the Septuagint; three of these (74, 79, 83) are held, as already indicated, to be "Maccabæan". Is it likely that the Asaph collection was not completed until about the middle of the second century B.C.? The titles of the psalms are confessedly later additions, but it may well be doubted whether any of them are as late as this.

While it is not claimed that any of the reasons here put forth against a Maccabæan date for any of the psalms is in itself conclusive, we submit that the cumulative effect of the arguments is against such a date.

The contention as to the existence of Maccabæan psalms is due, of course, to the mention of the destruction or desecration of the temple, and of religious persecution, contained in those psalms. It is asked, To what can these refer (the destruction of the temple in 586 B.C. being out of the question) if not to what happened at the beginning of the Maccabæan struggle? Ignoring, for the moment, the objections raised against Maccabæan psalms, it must be granted that the question is not without force. But our scant knowledge of Jewish history during the fourth and third centuries B.C. should forbid dogmatism here. Even if history does not record any events to which the psalms in question might refer, it does not necessarily follow that the writers were unacquainted with events which may have happened, and the record of which has not come down to us. Of one such event, indeed, we have knowledge; and it has often been pointed out that the reference in the psalms of which we are thinking is to this event. In 351 B.C. a revolt on the part of Phœnicia broke out against Artaxerxes III Ochus, the Persian king; it was of a serious character, for it was not quelled for three years. The references to it in ancient literature give

¹ The great majority of those in a position to judge hold these books to have been Hebrew, not Aramaic, in their origin.

but scanty details, but they show that the whole of Syria was involved, Egypt, too, joining in.¹ Owing to this general uprising against Persia, the Jews threw in their lot with the revolt. But when the Persians had once more gained the ascendant, the Jews suffered severely. The city of Jericho was destroyed, and many Jews were carried away captive to Babylonia, and to Hyrcania on the shores of the Caspian Sea. It is difficult to believe that Jerusalem, so near to Jericho, was left unmolested. Hecataeus of Abdera (306-283 B.C.) says that "the Persians formerly carried away many ten thousands of our people to Babylon".² This captivity, as Robertson Smith says, "implies a revolt, and the long account given by Diodorus³ (xvi. 40 ff.) of Ochus' doings in Phœnicia and Egypt shows how that ruthless king treated rebels. In Egypt the temples were pillaged and the sacred books carried away (*ibid.* c. 51). Why should we suppose that the temple at Jerusalem and the synagogues fared better? Such sacrilege was the rule in Persian warfare".⁴ Thus the possibility, at any rate, must be recognized that in the psalms in question it is not the desecration of the temple in 167 B.C. that was in the mind of the writers.

While, therefore, we would not deny that insertions may have been made in some of the psalms as late as Maccabæan times, and perhaps even later, we cannot but feel that, for the reasons given, "Maccabæan Psalms", as such, have not been incorporated in the Psalter.

¹ Eusebius, *Chronicon*, ed. Schoene, II, 112, 113 (1866). Schürer (*Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes* . . ., III, 7 (1909) quotes also from Syncellus, ed., Dindorf, Vol. I, p. 486, and from Orosius, III, 7.

² Quoted by Josephus, *Contra Ap.* I, 194.

³ Second half of the first century, B.C.

⁴ *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, p. 438 (1895). The archæological evidence regarding the late date of synagogues in Palestine has only recently become available.

CHAPTER X

THE THEOLOGY AND THE RELIGIOUS TEACHING OF THE PSALMS

IN dealing with the individual psalms, we have, in most cases, added a section on its religious teaching; but it will be well to summarize all that is said, and thus to get a general view of the religion and theology of the Psalter as a whole. It will be understood that we can give here no more than a summary; for to deal adequately with such a widely ranging subject would require a volume for itself.

As has been pointed out (pp. 1 f.), the periods during which the psalms were written cover many centuries; therefore the religious conceptions and beliefs set forth in them necessarily differ greatly in spirit and content. Extraneous religious thought is often reflected, and among the Hebrew thinkers themselves differing points of view find expression. But this only enhances the interest of the whole great subject, since it illustrates the profound truth that divine revelation is progressive, in accordance with man's capacity for apprehending the mind and will of the Almighty.

i. THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

Here we have first to consider the question of *monotheistic belief*. It must be recognized that a pure monotheism, such as is expressed, for example, in Isa. 45^{21, 22}, 46⁹, occurs but rarely in the psalms. In Ps. 115³⁻⁷, where idols are described as nothingness, a true monotheism is implied, though not definitely expressed, and the same is true of Ps. 135¹⁵⁻¹⁷; but these two passages stand alone. Loyalty to the God of Israel is abundantly illustrated in almost every psalm that appears, but again and again we come across passages in which the recognition of the existence of other gods is outspokenly stated; obviously they are not to be compared with Yahweh the God of Israel; but naturally every national god was conceived by his worshippers to be superior to other gods; that is just where the difference between monolatry and monotheism lies. That the psalmists believed in the reality of other gods comes out only too clearly in many passages; thus, to give but a few illustrations; in Ps. 77¹³ it is said: "Who is a great god like our God?" That assumes the existence of other gods; more pointed are the words in Ps. 81⁹: "There shall no strange god be in thee, and thou shalt not worship a foreign god". Similarly: "There is none

like thee among the gods, Yahweh " (86^a); " For Yahweh is a great God; and a great King above all gods " (95³); " For I know that Yahweh is great, and that our Lord is above all gods " (135⁵); and there are many other passages to the same effect. But though a pure monotheism is but rarely enunciated in the psalms, that does not in any way impugn the belief in the uniqueness of Yahweh; and, taking the Psalter as a whole, we can see how the change was gradually taking place in the way in which other gods were regarded; sometimes they are viewed as inferior deities, sometimes apparently as evil spirits, elsewhere as abominations, and finally as nonentities, figments of the imagination. In fact, within the relatively small space of the Psalter we find mirrored the stages of belief presented during the history of the religion of Israel as a whole. What has been well said by W. T. Davison of the Old Testament in general is true also of the book of the *Psalms* taken by itself: " The lesson of the Old Testament ", he says, " is the establishment of the worship of one God, unique, incomparable, the one God that matters. The main light shines clear, whatever vague forms flit and glimmer in the twilight around it. The history of revelation in the Old Testament is a history of the way in which this light was seen to shine more purely and more powerfully till all the shadows of lesser deities fled away." ¹ That is the final development which, as we have seen, does also appear in the psalms, though rarely. And therefore it can be no matter of surprise to find that sometimes in the psalms *undeveloped conceptions* of Yahweh are to be met with. To some of these we must now draw attention. In many instances there can be no doubt that, when human emotions are attributed to God, they are to be understood figuratively; if, even so, they sound irreverent to modern ears, it must be remembered that they are Oriental modes of expression, and the Oriental clothes his thoughts in realistic guise. When, for example, it is said in Ps. 2⁴: " He that abideth in the heavens laugheth, Yahweh doth have them [*i.e.*, the kings of the earth] in derision ", this may be nothing more than an attempt to portray the contemptible insignificance of men in the sight of God who set themselves in opposition to him; they are, in the forcible French phrase, *pour rire*. Similarly, when in Ps. 35²³ the psalmist says: " Stir up thyself, arouse thee for my cause, my God, for my plea ", the words sound very irreverent to our ears; but it is merely an exaggerative Oriental mode of expressive ardent prayer. And many other illustrations of a similar character could be given. On the other hand, anthropomorphisms occur which, however figuratively they may have been interpreted in later days, were in their origin conceived literally. For example, in several passages " refuge " is sought " under the wings " of Yahweh (Ps. 17⁸, 36⁷, 57¹, 63⁷, 91⁴); the idea may have

¹ *Encycl. of Religion and Ethics*, VI, 253 b (1913).

been originally borrowed from the "Horus-hawk", the symbol of Horus, which by identification with the sun's disk gave rise to the winged disk, the symbol of the deified Pharaoh. When, therefore, the Hebrews first borrowed this idea, and adapted it to Yahweh, it may reasonably be supposed that they understood it literally. Again, in many passages Yahweh is represented as a man of war; thus, in Ps. 24⁸ it is said: "Yahweh strong and mighty, Yahweh mighty in battle"; and Ps. 35¹⁻³: "Strive, Yahweh, against them that strive with me, fight against them that fight against me; take hold of shield and buckler, and rise up for my help; and unsheath spear and battle-axe, to meet my pursuers"; particularly striking is Ps. 44⁹: "But thou hast cast us off, and brought us to shame, and thou wentest not forth with our hosts"; so, too, Ps. 60¹⁰. The frequency of this representation of Yahweh elsewhere in the Old Testament makes it difficult to believe that passages like these are not meant literally. That Yahweh was not thought of as visibly present would not affect belief in his invisible presence. An instructive passage in this connexion occurs in 2 Kgs. 6^{8a}; even though this be but a legendary narrative, it reflects ancient belief: Elisha's servant, on seeing the Syrian host, says to the prophet, "Alas, my master, how shall we do?" Elisha then prays that his servant's eyes may be opened, then he sees the mountain "full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha". In much later times, during the Maccabæan wars, we have another story of the intervention of superhuman warriors in the battle: "But when the battle waxed strong, there appeared out of heaven unto their adversaries five men on horses with bridles of gold, in splendid array; and, leading on the Jews, they took Maccabæus between them, and covering him with their own armour, guarded him from wounds, while on the adversaries they shot forth arrows and thunderbolts . . ." (2 Macc. 10^{29, 30}). Here again we have a legend; but it cannot be denied that such old-world stories have a history behind them. They reflect the ancient belief of the actual intervention of supernatural beings; and though in these two stories Yahweh himself does not appear, it is not difficult to see, from the psalms passages quoted, that in earlier days it was believed that he himself intervened. This anthropomorphic conception, then, in the psalms, it may be justifiably contended, was meant literally, Yahweh being believed to be invisibly present. At the same time it is fully recognized that it is by no means always possible to feel sure whether a literal or a figurative sense is to be postulated in the passages in question. The *trust in Yahweh* thus affirmed is brought out in more spiritual directions in a very beautiful way; indeed, this is the most prominent element in the doctrine of God as set forth in the Psalter. A few illustrations of this must be given. What may perhaps be called the classical passage setting forth this very lovely relationship of man to God

is Ps. 23; the familiar words lose none of their beauty by repetition: "Yahweh is my shepherd, I shall not want", more literally, "I lack nothing". The experience of life has taught the psalmist that trust in God is all in all. In one form or another this central element of religion appears throughout the Psalter. The psalmists describe the many ways in which troubles assailed them: sickness, misfortune, envy, and ill-treatment on the part of many among their own people; the victims of slander by unscrupulous adversaries; the violence of pagan Gentiles; and sometimes even the fear that they were forsaken by God—but in every trial, in every emergency, in every danger, material or spiritual, there is the conviction that God can and will help: "Why art thou bowed down, my soul, and groanest within me? Wait for God, for I will yet thank him, the help of my countenance, and my God" (Ps. 42⁵). The whole of Ps. 121, again, offers a beautiful illustration of the conviction that God is very near at hand in any and every emergency. It is unnecessary to illustrate this further, but this witness of God as man's helper, so prominent all through the psalms, is of the greatest importance in considering the religious teaching set forth in them. Then, not unconnected with this, we have the teaching concerning the *worship of God*. This expression of man's relationship to God is such an obvious element in religion that it would seem hardly necessary to dwell upon it; nevertheless, it belongs so intimately to the content of the psalms that it cannot be altogether passed over in silence. Praise, prayer, and thanksgiving—in other words, man's communion with God—is more vividly and insistently set forth in the psalms than anywhere else in the Bible. That, of course, is to be expected in a book of hymns; but let us briefly consider the conception of worship as presented in the psalms. The *duty* of praise, incumbent upon every true believer, though usually taken for granted, is sometimes expressed by the psalmists when they invite men to come and worship; thus, in the familiar words of the *Venite* (Ps. 95⁶)—the Hebrew differs slightly from the Prayer-Book Version—we have: "Let us enter in [*i.e.*, into the temple], let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before our Maker". Again, in 96⁹ it is said, "Worship Yahweh in holy array, entreat his favour, all the earth"; and, once more, in 99⁹: "Exalt Yahweh, our God, and worship at his holy hill, for holy is Yahweh our God". Then we get some touching passages in which the true lover of God expresses his yearning to come into the sanctuary to worship: "As the hart panteth for water brooks, so panteth my soul for thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, the living God; when shall I come and behold the face of God?" (42^{1, 2}). Another psalmist, far away from his native land, recalls the time when he worshipped in the sanctuary, and longs to be present there again: "Yahweh, my God, I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee in a dry land where no water is;

even as when in the sanctuary I beheld thee, to see thy might and thy majesty; for better than life is thy love; my lips shall praise thee" (63¹⁻³). Such, and other similar passages, tell of a yearning for worship which is very inspiring. Very often we get expressions of the joy felt in worship, and these, too, are very beautiful: "Rejoice, O ye righteous, in Yahweh; for the upright praise is fitting. Give thanks to Yahweh with harp, sing praise with a ten-stringed lute. Sing to him a new song, play skilfully, with a shout of joy" (33¹⁻³). That "shout of joy" is a kind of liturgical technical term, characteristic of Oriental unrestraint. Something similar occurs in Ps. 81^{1, 2}: "Shout aloud unto God our strength, and make a joyful noise before the God of Jacob. Lift up a song of praise [*i.e.*, lift up the voice in praise], sound the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the lyre." And, once more, the spirit of joy in worship is expressed in the words: "I was glad when they said unto me, 'We are going to the house of Yahweh'" (Ps. 122¹); it is the description of pilgrims going up to Jerusalem to keep the feast.

One other thing in this connexion must be noted—namely, the stress laid on sincerity of worship; the whole of Ps. 15 is concerned with this, teaching that only those who are genuine and faithful servants of Yahweh are fit to worship in his sanctuary: "Yahweh, who may sojourn in thy tabernacle? Who may abide upon thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness"; and then the psalmist enumerates the various types of men from whom the sincere worshipper must differ. A similar thought occurs in Ps. 118²⁰: "This is the gate of Yahweh, the righteous shall enter therein", *i.e.*, this is the gate leading into Yahweh's sanctuary, the righteous, and no others, have the right to enter. Finally, very significant is what is said in Ps. 141²⁻⁴, where sincerity in worship is insisted on: "Let my prayer be set forth as incense before thee, the lifting-up of my hands as an evening oblation; set, Yahweh, a watch o'er my mouth, a guard on the door of my lips. . . ."

These few illustrations, then, will suffice to give us some idea of the conception of worship set forth in the psalms.

And now we must refer to another subject, another form of worship, which is also directly connected with the conception of God, and which, therefore, comes under the heading of the Doctrine of God: the subject, namely, of *sacrificial worship*. Purely spiritual worship, such as we have just been considering, which is not concerned with the materialistic ideas involved in the offering of sacrifices, obviously conceives of the Personality of God in a very different way from that which thinks of him as being pleased with the gifts of animals, or of the fruits of the earth. Now, as we shall see, there are but very few passages in the psalms in which the whole idea of sacrifices is directly repudiated; on the other hand, it is evident from many other passages that sacrificial

worship was regarded as normal; a fact which is amply witnessed to elsewhere. Nevertheless, we are bound to ask ourselves, in view of the high ideal of worship which we have seen to have been prevalent among the psalmists, whether many of them did not in their heart of hearts look upon the offering of sacrifices as involving a somewhat unsatisfying conception of God. To repudiate altogether the traditional and time-honoured mode of worship would have required exceptional boldness, and might have been misapprehended as lacking in loyalty to Yahweh, seeing that sacrifices were ordained in the Law. Besides, there were the masses to be thought of, who could not conceive of worship without the offering of sacrifices. If, therefore, reticence was felt to be needful, it was prompted by laudable motives. But that would not have suppressed the inner convictions of many of the psalmists whose conception of God was of a more spiritual nature. We are therefore led to believe that the thought of spiritual worship was more widely held by many of the psalmists than appears upon the surface. That this was not, however, the case with all the psalmists, we must now proceed to show by a few quotations. In Ps. 20³ the devout wish is expressed that Yahweh may "remember all thy meal-offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice"; four technical sacrificial terms are used here. Again in Ps. 50⁵ the psalmist cries, putting the words into the mouth of God: "Gather to me my godly ones that have made covenant with me with sacrifice"; and in Ps. 54⁶ it is said: "With a free-will offering will I sacrifice to thee, I will praise thy name, for it is good"; and to give but one more illustration out of many, in Ps. 66¹³⁻¹⁵ the psalmist glories in the thought of how he is going to fulfil all his vows made in gratitude for having been delivered from trouble: "I will enter into thy house with whole burnt-offerings, I will pay my vows unto thee, which my lips did utter, and my mouth did speak, when I was in trouble; whole burnt-offerings of fatlings will I offer unto thee, with the incense of rams [*i.e.*, the smoke rising from the burning of the sacrifice], I will offer bullocks together with goats". That will suffice to show the normal mode of worship often spoken of in the psalms. In contrast to this we have instances, and they are but few, in which the idea of sacrifice is directly repudiated; they are well known, but their importance demands our notice of them. First we have in Ps. 40⁶ the psalmist's words addressed to the Almighty: "Sacrifice and meal-offering thou desirest not, whole burnt-offering and sin-offering thou dost not ask"; clearly it is here implied that God has no pleasure in receiving sacrifices; the fulfilment of the Law and witnessing to the righteousness of God are, as the context says, of vastly greater importance. But more striking is what is said in Ps. 50⁸⁻¹⁴, words imputed to God: "Not because of thy sacrifices do I reprove thee, thy burnt-offerings are always before me. I desire no bullock out of thine house, nor he-goats

out of thy fold. . . . If I were hungry I would not tell thee, for mine is the world and its fulness ; do I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats ? Sacrifice thanksgiving unto God, and pay to the Most High thy vows." Again, in Ps. 51^{16, 17} it is said : " For thou delightest not in sacrifice, though I brought a whole burnt-offering thou wouldst have no pleasure therein. My sacrifice is a broken spirit ; a heart broken and crushed, O God, thou wilt not despise." And, once more, the spiritual conception of worship is expressed in Ps. 69^{30, 31} : " I will praise the name of God with a song, and I will magnify him with thanksgiving ; and it will please Yahweh better than an ox, a bullock with horns and hoofs ". These few passages, then, express the beauty of spiritual worship apart from sacrifices, and therefore a more exalted conception of God ; they are the only ones which directly discountenance sacrificial worship.

Our next subject for brief consideration in dealing with the doctrine of God in the *Psalms* is the very beautiful way in which the psalmists describe the Almighty as the *God of Love*. The Hebrew word *hesed* has various meanings, according to the context of the passages in which it occurs, but in its most exalted sense it expresses " love ", together with all that this connotes. It is one of the great words of the Hebrew language, and no one word in English will carry its full meaning. It may be an attitude of equals towards one another, it may be felt by the inferior for the superior, it may be shown by the superior to the inferior. Nor is it merely a mode of action or an emotion. It is an essential quality of soul, a spiritual endowment which goes deep down into the very nature of him who has it. It implies a full recognition of the value of personality, and adds to that recognition a consecration of one to another. No other word means so much to the Hebrew ear, and its cultivation in the human heart is the highest demand of the prophetic morality. In all its completeness it can be seen only in Yahweh. Nothing shows more convincingly the psalmists' apprehension of God than the way in which they attribute to him the quality of *hesed*. The fulness of its content is nowhere more beautifully set forth than in Ps. 86¹⁵ : " But thou, Yahweh, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth "; compassion, graciousness, long-suffering, mercy, truth, are all embraced in " love "; very similar to this passage are Pss. 103⁸, 145^{8, 9}. The illimitability of divine love is expressed in the words : " For as high as the heavens above the earth, so high is his love over them that fear him " (Ps. 103¹¹). No wonder that it was said : " For better than life is thy love " (Ps. 63³). Another psalmist in the depth of his gratitude to God reiterates the refrain in every verse of the well-known Ps. 136 : " For his love (*hesed*) endureth for ever ". This could be illustrated to any extent ; suffice to say that the word *hesed* occurs in twenty-three passages in the *Psalms*, in addition

to the many more in which the various attributes of love occur ; all in reference to God. Then we have the very frequent mention of Yahweh as the *God of law, of righteousness and justice* ; this, however, does not need further illustration.

But something must be said of the teaching that Yahweh as the Creator is the *God of Nature*. There is the frequent assertion that Yahweh brings about all that happens in Nature, according to his will. What we understand as the laws of Nature and their working is ascribed to individual and separate acts of God. Thus, in 65^{9, 10} we read : " Thou hast visited the earth, and watered it, greatly dost thou enrich it ; the brook of God is full of water, thou preparest the corn thereof (*i.e.*, of the earth) ; yea, thus thou preparest it : watering the furrows thereof, levelling the ridges thereof ; thou makest it soft with shower, thou blessest the growth thereof ". Much to the point, too, is 135^{6, 7} : " All that he willed hath Yahweh done in heaven and earth, in the seas and all deeps ; he bringeth up mists from the ends of the earth ; he maketh lightnings for the rain, he bringeth forth wind from his treasures " (cp. Jer. 10¹³, 51¹⁶). So in many other passages. Then we have the teaching that Yahweh is the *God of History* ; and here prophetic influence is very marked ; in proof of this the following passage from Isa. 14²⁴⁻²⁷ is well worth quoting : " Yahweh of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass ; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand : that I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot. . . . This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth ; and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. For Yahweh of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it ? And his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back ? " (see also Isa. 7¹⁸⁻²⁰). In the same way the psalmists teach that historical events are ordained and directed by God. One or two illustrations, of many, may be given. In 44¹⁻³ we read : " O God, with our ears have we heard, our fathers have told unto us, the work that thou didst in their days, in the days of old by thy hand. Nations thou didst drive out, and planted them (*i.e.*, our fathers) in, didst afflict peoples, and settle them down ; for not by their sword did they possess the land, and not was their arm victorious for them ; but thy right hand, and thy strong arm, and the light of thy countenance, for thou didst favour them." Again, in 111⁶ it is said : " The power of his works he made known to his people in giving them the heritage of the nations ". Many other passages to the same effect could be quoted ; but this is not necessary.

What has been said will, it may be hoped, have given all the important matters concerning the psalmists' doctrine of God.

Finally, there is the teaching on *Universalism*. Here, once more, it is seen how some of the psalmists were influenced by prophetic teach-

ing. That the subject is not mentioned more often is due to the nature of the contents of most of the psalms; but here and there the thought of the universal recognition of God by all nations receives expression; thus Ps. 66 opens with the words: "Shout for joy unto God, all the earth, sing praise to the glory of his name . . . Let all the earth worship thee, sing praise to thee, sing praise to thy name"; and again in verse 8: "Bless, O ye peoples, our God, make the sound of his praise to be heard", cp. Isa. 44^{22, 23}, 54⁵; a similar thought occurs in 67²⁻⁵, 86^{9, 10}, 96¹⁰, 148¹¹. Of special interest is 47^{8, 9}, where the Gentiles are thought of as joining together in worship with Israel: "Yahweh is become king over the nations, he sitteth upon his holy throne; the princes of the peoples are gathered together with the people of the God of Abraham; for to God belong the rulers of the earth; he is greatly exalted". It is hardly necessary to add that this conception of the universality of God's rule, and the union of all nations with his people in worshipping him, has a direct bearing on the doctrine of God.

ii. BELIEF IN SUPERNATURAL BEINGS

We do not include here the belief in the existence of the gods of the nations, as this was necessarily considered when we dealt with monotheistic belief. But in a number of the psalms reference is made to supernatural beings of a very different order. Of these something must be said. First, there is the belief in heavenly beings, who are always represented as the ministers of Yahweh, and therefore as wholly inferior to him. The belief in the heavenly hierarchy appears again and again; thus, in Ps. 89⁵⁻⁷ praise is offered to Yahweh by the hosts above; the passage is a very striking one: "The heavens give praise for thy wondrous acts, Yahweh, yea, for thy faithfulness, the assembly of holy ones; for who in the skies can compare with Yahweh, [who] is like Yahweh among the sons of gods? God, who is fearful in the assembly of the holy ones. . . ." There can be no doubt that the angels are here referred to, although in the Old Testament they are usually designated *mal'akim*, "messengers", i.e., of God, cp. Ps. 91¹¹, "For he shall give his angels charge over thee". The term "sons of gods" (cp. Ps. 29¹) was originally used in a polytheistic sense, but here it is intended to indicate that the angels were divine beings; elsewhere they are called "sons of God" (Gen. 6^{2, 4}, in reference to the fallen angels; Job 1⁶, 2¹). They are also spoken of as "in the skies", and in v. 8, where it says: "Yahweh of hosts, who is like unto thee", the word "hosts" refers to the hosts of heaven; but under this term, as Ps. 148¹⁻³ shows, the heavenly luminaries are meant: "Praise Yahweh from the heavens, praise him in the heights; praise him, all ye his angels (*mal'akim*), praise him, all ye his host; praise him sun and moon, praise him all ye stars of light"; in Ps. 103^{20, 21}, too, "his

angels" (*mal'akim*) is parallel to "his host" (cp. Ps. 19¹, 50⁶, 97⁶). Their creation is spoken of in Ps. 33⁶: "By his word were the heavens made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host" (cp. Gen. 2¹, Isa. 40²⁶, 45¹²). The primary duty of the angels, as all these passages tell, is to worship the Almighty in the spheres above; but in a few other passages it is seen that they had duties to perform also on earth. Here we may note, first, an old-world echo according to which, as God's ministers, the angels accompany him when he leaves the heavenly spheres to come down on to the earth. Clouds, wind, and fire were all in ancient belief conceived of as animated beings; in later Hebrew thought these were represented as subordinate ministers of God, of the angelic nature, whom he used for his special purposes; thus, in Ps. 104^{3, 4} it is said: "Who maketh clouds his chariot, who goeth forth on the wings of the wind, who maketh winds his messengers (*mal'akim*), fire and flame his ministers". In this connexion we may refer to Ps. 68¹⁷: "The chariots of God are twenty thousand even thousands upon thousands", which means that in his going forth the train of the Almighty which followed him was composed of a mighty host of angels in chariots, an innumerable company. A curious idea, which has an old-world ring about it, is that which imputes to angels the eating of material food; in Ps. 78^{24, 25} it is said: "He rained down manna upon them to eat, and gave them of the corn of heaven; man did eat the bread of the mighty, he sent food to the full". That by "the mighty" (*'abbitim*) angels are meant is seen from Ps. 103²⁰, where they are called "mighty", though a different word is used in Hebrew: "Bless Yahweh, ye angels of his, ye, mighty in strength (*gibborê koah*), that fulfil his command". In Ps. 105⁴⁰ the manna is called "bread from heaven". This idea of the angels eating food goes back to ancient times. As a rule angelic functions are spoken of as being exercised in the heavenly spheres; but in a few cases they are thought of as active on earth; thus, in Ps. 34⁷ we read: "The angel (*mal'ak*) of Yahweh encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them"; and in Ps. 57³ the same thought occurs, though the angel is not directly mentioned: "He shall send from heaven and save me"; but most pointed is Ps. 91¹¹: "For his angels he will give charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways; they shall bear thee up, on their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone". Here the function of angels is that of guardianship, but elsewhere they are spoken of as God's instruments of punishment; thus, in Ps. 35^{5, 6} it is said in reference to the psalmist's enemies: "Let them be as chaff before the wind, with the angel of Yahweh pursuing them; let their way be dark and slippery, with the angel of Yahweh driving them on". And in Ps. 78⁴⁹, where the Egyptians are spoken of, it is said: "He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath and indignation and

trouble, a band of harmful angels". Here we have the personification of wrath, indignation, and trouble, conceived of as destructive angels; the counterpart of this personification occurs in Ps. 43³, where light and truth are angelic persons leading the psalmist, according to his prayer, to God's holy hill, *i.e.*, to the temple to worship: "O send out thy light and thy truth, let them lead me; let them bring me to thy holy hill, and unto thy dwelling-places" (cp. also 25²¹, 57³, 85¹³).

A different class of supernatural beings, though of the angelic order, which are mentioned three times in the psalms, are the *Cherubim*. Of these it is not necessary to say much here; that the conception of them was of Babylonian origin there is no doubt. The first mention of them is in Ps. 18¹⁰, which contains mythical elements; it is there said of Yahweh that "he rode upon a cherub, and did fly", *i.e.*, the cherub flew; it reflects a very undeveloped conception of Yahweh. In Ps. 80¹ it is said: "Thou that sittest upon the cherubim, shine forth"; the thought is evidently that of Yahweh sitting upon his heavenly throne, from which he rules the world; the Cherubim are the guardians of the throne (cp. Ezek. 28^{13, 14, 16}). The same picture is presented in Ps. 99¹: "Yahweh is become king, let the peoples tremble, he sitteth upon the cherubim, let the earth shake". This echoes the early Israelite belief that the Cherubim were, in effect, the divine chariot, the bearers of Yahweh's throne in its progress through the world (cp. 1 Sam. 4⁴, 2 Sam. 6²). The belief in them must have been very real, for they figure largely in post-Biblical Jewish literature.

The last of the supernatural beings of which something must be said are the *Demons*. Here again we have a belief which goes back in its origin to very early times, and plays a great part in later days. In the *Psalms* the mention of them is very rare, but though only incidentally referred to it is certain that belief in their activity was deep-seated. In Ps. 106³⁶⁻³⁸, in reference to the Israelites after their settlement in Canaan, it is said, "And they served their idols [*i.e.*, of the nations], and they became a snare unto them; and they sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons (*šēdīm*), and they poured out innocent blood, and the land was polluted with blood". It is in Ps. 91, however, that we get the most striking allusions to demons, though the term for "demons" (*šēdīm*) is not actually used; but for the details we must refer to the notes on this psalm. It is worth noting that in the Talmud (*Sebuoth* 15^b) this psalm is called "a song for evil encounters", *i.e.*, of demons, and its use in the event of demoniacal onslaughts is recommended. In Ps. 58^{4, 5} the mention of "serpent" and "adder" refers, in all probability, to demons, for serpents were regarded as the incarnations of demons.

This concludes, then, what is said in the *Psalms* about supernatural beings.

iii. THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

Based on the teaching of the prophets, the doctrine of sin in the *Psalms* centres on the truth that what constitutes sin is the doing of something which is contrary to the divine commands; an act is sinful because it is against the will of God. If this definition of sin, as implied in the prophetic *dictum*, "your iniquities have separated between you and your God" (Isa. 59²), is not quoted in so many words, it is because it has become axiomatic. This may sound self-evident, but it must be remembered that in pre-prophetic times "sin is almost invariably presented to us as nothing more than disobedience to the statutes regulating religious, social, and civil life in Israel, and the violation of the good customs in vogue among this people."¹ But probably the earliest idea of sin was connected with ritual offences, for such things as lying (Gen. 20²), deception (Gen. 27⁹), drunkenness (Gen. 9²¹), adultery (Gen. 16³), suicide (1 Sam. 31⁴), are mentioned without any hint of their being sinful acts. It is thus impossible to exaggerate the enormous advance in ethical teaching due to the prophets. It is to them that the psalmists were primarily indebted for their doctrine of sin. Further, while it is fully recognized by the psalmists that the consequences of sin entail sickness and misfortune, it is not merely on that account that sin is to be avoided, but because sin involves a break in the relationship between a man and his God. And again, it is not because divine help is withdrawn from him who sins that a good man refrains from sin, rather it is because a sinner cannot have communion with God. When sin has been committed, or when, as a result, sickness or adversity overtakes the sinner, in one way or another the yearning is expressed of entering again into communion with God—in other words, of re-establishing the relationship with him. When, therefore, a psalmist has suffered for sin and confesses it, his comfort centres in his renewed communion with God in prayer: "My sin I made known to thee, and mine iniquity I hid not . . . therefore unto thee shall every godly man pray" (32^{5, 6}); similarly in 51, after confession of sin, the psalmist says, in v. 11: "Cast me not from thy presence, and take not thy spirit from me". This need not be further illustrated, for it occurs over and over again in many of the psalms. The deep sense of sin, so often expressed by the psalmist, appears in a twofold way: the horror expressed at sin in others, and the whole-hearted recognition of sin in the psalmists themselves, their confession, and the consequent certitude of forgiveness. How genuine and deep-seated was this sense of sin is shown by the conviction that even when sin is not discerned it may yet lurk within, though unrecognized: "Who can discern his errors? Clear thou me from hidden faults" (19¹²); and this is further

¹ Schultz, *Old Testament Theology* (Engl. Transl.), II. 281 (1892).

emphasized by the realization of the truth that God is all-knowing, that nothing is hidden from him: "Thou, O God, knowest my foolishness, and mine offences are not hid from thee" (69⁵).

While the existence of sin is taken for granted, no theory as to its origin is put forth by the psalmists; it is part of man's nature from birth, but no attempt is made to account for this; thus, in 51⁵ the psalmist says: "Behold, in iniquity was I brought forth, and in sin did my mother conceive me"; this is not intended to offer an excuse for having been guilty of sin, it is simply a statement of fact. In 50³, again, it is said: "The wicked are rebellious, from the womb they go astray, from the belly they speak lies"; an exaggerated statement, but expressing the same fact. There is no thought here of a doctrine of original sin through the fall of Adam; that is never taught in the Old Testament and has never been held in Judaism. There can be little doubt that, according to the belief of the psalmists, sinning was purely a matter of human action; to commit sin or to avoid sin lay with man's free-will, hence, though in exaggerated language, another psalmist could say: "Yea, thou wert my strength from the womb, my trust [when I was] upon my mother's breasts; on thee did I cast myself from the womb, thou art my God from my mother's belly"; in other words, the psalmist protested that he had put his trust in God from birth; that he should have exercised his free-will thus as a new-born babe is poetical hyperbole, but the words illustrate the belief of all the psalmists that sinful acts and good acts are alike a matter of human free-will. The traditional doctrine is expressed in the words of Ben-Sira: "If thou desirest, thou canst keep the commandment, and it is wisdom to do his [God's] good pleasure; and if thou trust him, of a truth thou shalt live. Poured out before thee are fire and water, stretch forth thine hand unto that which thou desirest. Life and death are placed before man, that which he desireth shall be given him" (Ecclus. 15¹⁵⁻¹⁷).

iv. THE DOCTRINE OF RETRIBUTION

This subject is closely connected with the foregoing. It is unnecessary to illustrate in detail the well-known fact that in ancient Israel in pre-prophetic times the idea of tribal solidarity accounted for the belief that the sin of one member of a family or community necessarily involved all the members (see, *e.g.*, Josh. 7^{1, 24, 25}, 2 Sam. 21). With the prophets this teaching underwent a transformation; while concerned with the nation as a whole, they also taught, at first but occasionally, the responsibility of the individual (*e.g.*, Am. 7¹⁷, Hos. 1-3, Isa. 22^{22, 23}). It is with Jeremiah and Ezekiel that the fuller development appears, *e.g.*, Jer. 31¹⁹, and especially Ezek. 18^{1ff.}: "What mean ye, that ye use this proverb among the sons of Israel,

saying : ' The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge ' ? As I live, saith Yahweh, none shall use this proverb in Israel any more. Behold, all souls are mine ; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine ; the soul that sinneth, it shall die. . . ." It is the following of the prophets that the psalmists base their teaching on individual responsibility. But according to the traditional teaching, so fully illustrated in the book of *Job*, all suffering and adversity were sent by God upon the sinner, whereas prosperity was the lot of the righteous. Thus theoretically the sinner was always the victim of sickness or misfortune, while the righteous always enjoyed health and prosperity. But the experience of life showed that this was far from being the case ; again and again the sinner was prosperous, and the righteous in distress. The question, therefore, forced itself upon thinkers in Israel : Is God just in letting the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer adversity ? We are concerned here only with the way in which the psalmists faced this problem and sought to solve it. Most of them simply accepted the traditional belief in spite of its perplexity. Thus, in Ps. 1 this is fully set forth ; of the righteous it is said " He is like a tree planted by the water . . . whatsoever he doeth it prospereth " (v. 3) ; but the wicked are " like the chaff which the wind driveth away . . . the way of the wicked shall perish " (vv. 4-6). The same teaching occurs over and over again. But in a few cases attempts are made to grapple with the problem ; with these we must deal a little more fully. First, however, it is worth noting that an attitude is sometimes adopted which, it may be safely assumed, was common : we mean the attitude of resigned acceptance of facts which can be neither understood nor altered. In Ps. 39, for example, the words with which the psalmist begins suggests that the sight of the wicked in prosperity had prompted doubts as to the justice of God in permitting this ; the expression of such doubts encouraged the wicked in their disbelief ; of this he now repents, saying : " I said, I will take heed to my words, that I sin not with my tongue ; I will put to my mouth a bridle because of the wicked before me ". If he cannot understand the ways of God, he will, at any rate, not impugn their justice. Then he gives expression to the thought of the transient character of the life of all men, good or bad ; implicitly, therefore, he concludes that what is, must be ; it is not for him to question the ways of God, nor to worry about what he cannot understand ; far more important is it for him to trust in God : " And now, what is my hope, O Lord ? my waiting is for thee ". It is an attitude of reverent resignation, but forgoes any attempt to solve the problem. With some other psalmists it is different ; here and there real attempts at a solution are made. Ps. 37 seems to have been written primarily with the object of showing that the prosperity of the wicked was merely apparent, or at best but short-lived. The whole psalm

should be read in order to see what sincere efforts the psalmist made to convince others that there was no need to be perplexed about the well-being of ungodly men, which was but a passing phase; it will be sufficient to quote the first two verses, which in substance is repeated again and again: "Be not enraged because of evil-doers, and be not envious of the workers of unrighteousness; for like grass do they speedily wither, and fade away like the green herb". Of the righteous, on the other hand, it is said: "He knoweth the ways of the perfect, and their inheritance abideth for ever" (v. 18). An optimistic outlook, though again no real solution of the problem; but the difficulty of reconciling the justice of God with the prosperity of the wicked and the adversity of the righteous was so far mitigated in that the duration of the former was held to be fleeting, while that of the latter was lasting. True, it was but *faute de mieux*, for the experience of life must have taught that, while in some instances the contention held good, it was far from being the rule.

In Ps. 49 two solutions are attempted; the first follows in the lines of Ps. 37; but in the second the psalmist touches upon a real solution—namely, that the ungodly at death, according to their deserts, go to Sheol; but the righteous, represented by the psalmist, are received by God. Here the implication is that, in the world to come, the incongruities of this life will be put right; life on the earth is but an unfinished episode; the righteousness and justice of God will be vindicated in the hereafter: "Like a flock of Sheol are they destroyed, death is their shepherd, hath dominion over them . . . but God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me" (vv. 14, 15). Finally, we come to Ps. 73. As we deal with this again on p. 91, it will suffice to quote here what the psalmist says of the latter end of the ungodly and of the righteous, respectively; of the former he says: "Surely in slippery places thou settest them, in beguiling thou bringest them down; how are they a waste in a moment, through terrors are finished and ended!" (vv. 18, 19). But of the righteous: "With thy counsel thou leadest me in the way, and afterwards wilt gloriously take me; whom have I in the heavens? In the earth I have no delight save in thee; my flesh and my heart cease to be, but my portion is God for ever" (vv. 23-26). Here again, then, it is taught that to judge only of what takes place in this life is to misconceive of the ways of him who is eternal, and to mistake man's final destiny. Final retribution for the wicked, the endless abiding in God's presence for the righteous; that is the psalmist's solution of the problem.

V. BELIEF IN THE AFTER-LIFE

This leads us to consider more fully what is taught by the psalmists regarding the life to come. As in other directions, it is the traditional

belief that appears most prominently here, namely, the Sheol belief; in three passages (88¹⁰, 106^{28, 37}) the primitive popular ideas of the departed seem to be referred to, but this is very exceptional, and need not detain us. There are good grounds for the contention that the Sheol belief became the official doctrine concerning the hereafter owing to the influence of the eighth-century prophets ¹; so that here again the psalmists were ultimately indebted to prophetic influence for their teaching. In accordance with what had become traditional belief, it is held that Sheol is situated under the earth; in 22²⁹ the departed are spoken of as "they that go down to the dust"; it is a place of darkness: "he causeth me to dwell in dark places" (143³); silence reigns there: "the dead praise not Yahweh, nor all that go down into silence" (115¹⁷); all things are forgotten there, it is called "the land of forgetfulness" in 88¹²; but it is conceived of as a great city, its "gates" are spoken of in 9¹³, 107¹⁸; it is synonymous with death (18^{4, 5}, 49¹⁴), with the "Pit" (28¹, 30³ and elsewhere), with "corruption" (30⁹), and with 'Abaddôn, "destruction" (88¹¹). For the godly the most terrible thing is that in Sheol there is no communion with God: "For in death there is no remembrance of thee, in Sheol who will give thanks unto thee?" (6⁶), "Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?" (30⁹, cp. 88⁵, 143⁷).

We have next to consider those few passages in which a development of belief is to be discerned; not all commentators are agreed on the interpretation of these passages, but we submit that there are good grounds for the view here held. First, we have two passages in which the psalmists, while not yet realizing the truth of life hereafter, express thoughts which come very near to this. Ps. 16⁹⁻¹¹ reads as follows: "Therefore my heart rejoiceth, and my soul is glad, my flesh also shall dwell in safety; for thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol, neither wilt thou suffer thy godly one to see the Pit. Thou showest me the path of life, fulness of joy is in thy presence, at thy right hand there are raptures for ever." Here we may be permitted to give the following quotation: ² "As the earlier part of the psalm shows, this passage must be taken as referring to belief in the After-life. Nevertheless, though this life is not to be thought of as eternal in the literal sense, since it terminates with the close of human existence, the conception of life as the psalmist experiences it, living in loyalty to God and feeling his nearness, thus making life very exalted and glorious, may in a true sense be said to anticipate life eternal. For the ideal of life held by the psalmist, that its value depends solely upon its being lived in communion with God, could not fail, sooner or later, to necessitate further thought. The

¹ For details, see Oesterley and Robinson, *Hebrew Religion, its origin and development*, pp. 318-327 (1935).

² Oesterley, *A Fresh Approach to the Psalms*, p. 265 (1937).

sense of close union with God, which the psalmist so beautifully sets forth, with him who is omnipotent, to whom time is nothing, leads inevitably to the question: How can such a union cease? And there we are on the very threshold of the belief in its continuance hereafter." Our psalmist was coming very near to the beautiful truth expressed in Wisd. 15³: "For to know thee is perfect righteousness, yea, to know thy dominion (τὸ κράτος) is the root of immortality".

Our next passage is 17¹⁵: "As for me, in righteousness I behold thy face, I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thine appearance". It is difficult to understand these words in the sense of awakening from natural sleep; the psalmist shows that he is in constant communion with God, and experiences the unceasing nearness of God; he never contemplates separation from God; why, then, should he be satisfied with the divine appearance only on awaking from natural sleep? It should also be noted that the word for "appearance" or "form", in reference to Yahweh, is extremely rare, occurring elsewhere only in Num. 12⁸, Deut. 4¹², in each case under very special circumstances. Death is spoken of as "sleep", *e.g.*, in Ps. 76⁵, Jer. 51^{39, 57} and possibly Ps. 90⁵; in Isa. 26¹⁹ it is said: "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust". It can scarcely be doubted, therefore, that the psalmist is here thinking of awaking from the sleep of death, and thus expresses belief in the life hereafter. In Ps. 39^{6, 7} the psalmist says: "Surely as a vapour doth every man stand, surely as a shadow man doth walk . . . And now, what is my hope, O Lord? My waiting is for thee." The emphasis laid here on the transience of human life, with which is contrasted "my hope", "my waiting is for thee", justifies the contention that the psalmist is thinking here of life with God, *i.e.*, life unending. Opinions differ on the meaning of the passage, but we range ourselves with Duhm,¹ who says in reference to it: "It appears to me that no other explanation is possible than that of assuming that the poet in silent thought hoped for the continuance of life after death, though without being able to base this hope on any demonstrable proof, or on any teaching that had been put forth. . . . Therefore, since he is unable, or unwilling, to rely upon any general doctrine of immortality, which might solve the riddle of the forlornness of human existence, whereby to still his perplexity, he pleads sadly, and with hesitation, 'What is my hope? Everything depends on thee.' It is a silent prayer, the prayer of one sighing in this fleeting life for that which is abiding."

This belief receives more definite expression in Ps. 49, quoted in part above; here the psalmist contrasts the lot of the wicked hereafter with that which, in his ardent trust in God, he is convinced is reserved for him; there can, therefore, be no doubt as to his meaning; in

¹ *Die Psalmen*, p. 115 (1899).

reference to the former he says: "Like a flock of Sheol are they destroyed, death is their shepherd, hath dominion over them; in the field of Abaddon is their resting-place, in the belly of Sheol is their dwelling". As for himself, on the other hand, he can say: "But God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me".

Coming now to Ps. 139, the psalmist begins by setting forth the omniscience of God; then he goes on to speak of God's omnipresence; this unique conception of God, so far as the psalmists are concerned, justifies the contention that this psalmist did contemplate some form of real life hereafter. What is of special significance is the belief that God is present in Sheol: "If I descended to Sheol, lo, thou art there" (v. 8). As already pointed out, the normal Sheol doctrine taught that God was wholly unconcerned with that place whither the departed descended, as with the departed themselves; but if God was thought of as being present there—present, that is, among the departed—that must imply a changed outlook regarding the hereafter. Even if the psalmist did not envisage life after death in its fulness, what he says shows at any rate the dawning of this in his mind; and it is prompted by his developed conception of the Personality of God.

Finally, there is the following passage in 73²³⁻²⁶: "Nevertheless, I am ever with thee, thou holdest my right hand. With thy counsel thou ledest me in the way, and afterwards wilt gloriously take me. Whom have I in the heavens? In the earth I have no delight save in thee; my flesh and my heart cease to be; but my portion is God for ever." Here again the primary condition of belief in a future life is expressed: communion with God; but in this psalm what that communion finally results in is more fully realized. Union with the eternal, unchanging God cannot be interrupted by death. As in life on this earth God is with his servant, so in the world to come God will be with him. In the presence of God there is life.

Among some modern commentators there appears to be a disinclination to recognize any signs of belief in a life hereafter in the *Psalms*. It may, however, be pertinent to ask whether sufficient consideration is given to the possibility of the influence of Zoroastrian belief on some of the deeper thinkers among the Jews, such as these psalmists were. The dates of those psalms in which, as we submit, belief in a life hereafter is contemplated, are post-exilic; so that there was ample time for such influence to have been exerted. The intercourse with Persia was undoubtedly considerable. In other directions Zoroastrian influence on Jewish thought is demonstrable; so that the possibility, to say the least, of such influence in the domain of the subject under consideration should be recognized.

vi. ESCHATOLOGY

In Ps. 85¹ there occurs the technical term *š'bûth*, which, as pointed out in the commentary, was adopted from prophetic usage, and means the "restoration" in reference to the "bringing back" of the primeval time of happiness, *i.e.*, the return of the "Golden Age". In Jer. 33¹¹ the prophet says, in the name of Yahweh: "I will cause the restoration (*š'bûth*) of the earth to return as at the first (or, 'as in the beginning') saith Yahweh". This is the thought which lies at the base of the eschatological hope so often referred to by the psalmists. The way in which this is spoken of shows that the various ideas connected with it were familiar, and therefore needed no explanation. That for the whole picture of the Eschatological Drama as presented in the Psalter the psalmists were indebted to the prophets is as clear as anything could be; the thoughts expressed and the very words used are in almost every detail taken from the prophetic writings. To illustrate this would involve a lengthy dissertation. We must therefore restrict ourselves to just a few of the many references to the prophetic books which could be given.

The belief in the looked-for "restoration" is thus expressed, *e.g.*, in Ps. 53⁶: "O for the salvation of Israel from Zion, when God bringeth back the restoration of his people" (cp. Jer. 30¹⁸, Am. 9¹¹); and in 126¹ the psalmist feels that it will be so glorious that he says: "When Yahweh bringeth back the restoration of Zion we shall be as those who dream"; and he pleads, "Bring back, Yahweh, our restoration as streams in the Negeb" (for the force of these words see the Commentary). The time of restoration is believed to be near: "Of a truth, nigh to them that fear him is his salvation, that his glory may abide in our land" (85⁹, cp. Isa. 10²⁵, Hab. 2³). Not only so, but, again in the prophetic mode, so certain is the belief in its near approach that it is sometimes envisaged as present: "Love and Truth are met together, Righteousness and Peace kiss each other; Truth sprouteth forth from the earth, and Righteousness looketh down from heaven" (85^{10, 11}, cp. Isa. 33¹⁰). The supreme glory and central significance of this renovation of the earth is that it will be inaugurated by the coming of Yahweh himself: "Thou wilt arise and have mercy on Zion, for the time is come to be gracious unto her" (102¹³, cp. Isa. 35⁴); and he will come in glory: "For Yahweh doth build up Zion, and shall appear in his glory in the midst of her" (102¹⁶, cp. Isa. 60¹⁻³); and in wondrous terror will he appear: "Clouds and darkness are round about him, righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne; fire goeth before him, and burneth his adversaries round about. His lightnings lighten the world, the earth seeth it, and trembleth, the mountains melt like wax before the Lord of all the earth" (97²⁻⁵, cp. Nah. 1⁵). The

convulsions of Nature which take place at Yahweh's appearance find frequent mention, *e.g.*, 93^{3, 4}: "The floods rose up, Yahweh, the floods raised up their roar, the floods raised up their crashing. More glorious than the roar of many waters, more glorious than the raging of the sea, is Yahweh, glorious on high (cp. Isa. 24^{19, 20}, Hab. 3¹⁰). It is the time of the great assize, for Yahweh comes forth as Judge: "For he cometh to judge the earth; he judgeth the world in righteousness, and the peoples in his faithfulness" (96¹³, see also 97⁸, 98⁹, cp. Joel 3¹²). The nations rise up in opposition to Yahweh, but they are overwhelmed by him: "Nations rage, kingdoms are moved; he uttereth his voice, the earth is dissolved" (46⁶, cp. Jer. 25³⁰, Joel 2¹¹); "For, lo, kings assembled, united together; they beheld; then were they terrified, dismayed, put in fear . . ." (48⁴⁻⁶, cp. Isa. 13⁸, 24²¹). As a result they acknowledge Yahweh as their God: "Yahweh is become king over the nations; he sitteth upon his holy throne; the princes of the people are gathered together with the people of the God of Abraham; for to God belong the rulers of the earth; he is greatly exalted" (47^{8, 9}, cp. Isa. 66¹⁸). This world-dominion of Yahweh finds frequent mention: "For Yahweh, the Most High, is terrible; a great king over all the earth" (47² and elsewhere, cp. Mal. 1¹⁴); it brings Israel gladness and joy: "Light ariseth upon the righteous, and joy to the upright of heart. Rejoice in Yahweh, O ye righteous, and give thanks to his holy name" (97^{11, 12}); "Then shall be filled our mouth with laughter, and our tongue with shouting. Then will they say: 'Yahweh hath done great things for them. Yahweh hath done great things for us, we are joyful'" (126¹⁻³, cp. Isa. 25^{1, 8}). Ultimately Israel will rule over all nations: "He subdueth peoples under us, and nations under our feet; he enlargeth for us our inheritance, the pride of Jacob whom he loveth" (47^{3, 4}, cp. Isa. 49^{2, 3}).

That some mythological *traits* appear in the eschatological picture presented by the psalmists illustrates again the presence of prophetic influence. Mention has been made of the terrors accompanying the advent of Yahweh—fire before him, the melting of the mountains, the roaring of the seas; these are of mythological origin. One or two other points may be referred to. Thus, in 82¹ there is the mention of the "divine council", cp. Isa. 24²¹. In 68¹⁸ there is an adaptation of the mythological "mountain of God"; so, too, in 36⁶, cp. Isa. 14^{13, 14}.

This, then, is a brief account of the psalmists' utilization of eschatological material. It could, of course, be much developed by further quotations both from the *Psalms* and from the prophetic books; but the main points have been mentioned. It is noticeable that there is no reference to the Messiah; but this, too, is in accordance with the predominant teaching of the prophets. On the question of Messianic prophecy in the *Psalms* see next chapter.

CHAPTER XI

THE PSALMS AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

THE use made of the *Psalms* in the New Testament, whether directly quoted or only alluded to, is a subject full of interest from several points of view. First and foremost there is Christ's use of them, which raises some important questions. Then there are the various instances in which the Evangelists quote the psalms as in reference to Christ; some of these suggest difficulties. This applies, too, to the use of the psalms in *Acts*, where a considerable number of quotations appear. Among the Pauline epistles more use is made of psalms in *Romans* than in any of the others. In the epistle to the *Hebrews*, as would be expected, quotations are numerous; sometimes their appropriateness may be questioned. In *Revelation* there are allusions rather than quotations.

To deal exhaustively with the subject would involve too extended a dissertation; we must, therefore, restrict ourselves to some of the more important illustrations.

In considering our Lord's use of the psalms we begin by noting the instances in which he quotes them in reference to himself. In Matth. 21¹⁶, in answer to the protest of the chief priests and scribes against the children crying out "Hosanna to the son of David", Christ rejoins: "Yea, did ye never read, *Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise*" (Ps. 8²). It must be noted that the quotation is from the Septuagint, which makes it appropriate to the occasion; had the Hebrew been quoted, where "strength" occurs instead of "praise", the quotation would have lost its force. The question naturally suggests itself as to why, in addressing the Jewish religious leaders, Christ should be represented as quoting the Septuagint form of the text rather than that familiar to his hearers. To this we shall have to return later. The quotation occurs only in the first Gospel, though the episode is recorded in Mk. 11¹⁵⁻¹⁸ and Lk. 19^{45, 46}. According to the Matthæan form of the passage, then, Christ applies the title "son of David" to himself; so that the fact that the quotation has been messianically interpreted is comprehensible; though in the psalm itself there is nothing that supports this interpretation.

We turn next to Matth. 21⁴² (= Mk. 12¹⁰, Lk. 20¹⁷), where at the end of the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen Christ adds: *The stone which the builders rejected, this is become the head of the corner*;

this is from the Lord, and it is marvellous in our eyes (Ps. 118^{22, 23}, in *Luke* the second verse is omitted). The quotation is again from the Septuagint. The "stone" is interpreted by Christ in reference to himself, and according to Acts 4¹¹ (cp. Rom. 9³³, Ephes. 2²⁰, 1 Pet. 2^{8a}), the early Church—and the same is true of the Jewish Church—interpreted the passage in a Messianic sense; but in the psalm there is no reference to the Messiah.

Again, in Matth. 22⁴¹⁻⁴⁵ (= Mk. 12^{36, 37}, Lk. 20⁴²⁻⁴⁴) Christ quotes Ps. 110¹: *The Lord said unto my lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I put thine enemies underneath thy feet* (*Mark and Luke* "till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet"). Without going into several points which arise here (see the Commentary), it will suffice to say that Christ is represented as interpreting the whole psalm as Messianic, and as applying it to himself; he had asked the question: "How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David?" Then the psalm is quoted and followed by the further question: "David himself called him Lord and whence is he his son?" Naturally enough, no one was able to give an answer; but what was implied by our Lord was that the Messiah—applied to himself—was not only the son of David, and therefore a human ruler, but also the Son of God, and therefore a divine ruler.

In Matth. 27⁴⁶ the utterance of our Lord from the Cross is recorded: *Eli, Eli, lama sabakhthani*. In Mk. 15³⁴ it is: *Eloi, Eloi . . .* In the parallel passage in Lk. 23^{44a}, these words do not occur, but only: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." The quotation, from Ps. 22¹, is in each case partly Hebrew, and partly Aramaic. There are other verses in this psalm which, though not quoted by our Lord, were made to refer to him by the evangelists. With their intimate knowledge of the psalms, the earliest disciples could not fail to observe the extraordinary similarity between some words of this psalm and what was happening during this dark hour; thus, in v. 18: *They apportion my garments among them, and upon my vesture do they cast lots* (cp. Mk. 15²⁴, Jn. 19^{23, 24}); similarly between v. 15: *My strength* [probably we should read "throat"] *is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws*, and what is said in Jn. 19^{28, 29}; and, again, between the words of v. 17: *They gaze and look at me*, and Lk. 23³⁵, "And the people stood beholding."

In a few other instances quotations from the psalms by the evangelists are given as applying to our Lord. Thus, in the account of the Temptation, Matth. 4⁶, Lk. 4¹⁰, the words of Ps. 91^{11, 12}, *He shall give his angels charge concerning thee; and on their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone* (from the Septuagint), are put into the mouth of Satan. And, to give one other illustration, Ps. 78² is quoted in reference to Christ's teaching by parable (Matth. 13³⁵;

I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world; the form of the text varies somewhat).

In the Synoptic Gospels, then, there are perhaps not so many quotations from the psalms as might have been expected. A few examples may be given, next, of the use of the psalms in the Fourth Gospel. In Jn. 10³⁴ the words of Ps. 82⁶, *I said, Ye are gods*, are quoted as though from the Law, to prove the divinity of Christ. It is a strange piece of exegesis. Again, in Jn. 15²⁵, *They hated me without a cause* (Ps. 35¹⁹ = 69⁵) is quoted as in reference to Christ. It is possible that the passage in Jn. 10¹⁸ about the Shepherd of the sheep was thought by the evangelist to be reminiscent of Ps. 95⁷: *For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand*. It must be confessed that the use of the psalms in the Fourth Gospel is not very pointed.

In Acts 1²⁰ two psalms are quoted, but loosely: *Let his habitation be made desolate, and let no man dwell therein* (Ps. 69²⁶); *His office let another take* (Ps. 109⁸); these are taken as a prophecy of Judas. Again, in Acts 2²⁵⁻²⁸ the Septuagint of Ps. 16⁸⁻¹¹ is quoted, but the crucial words are vv. 9, 10: *Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall dwell in safety. For thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption*. The passage is taken as in reference to Christ's resurrection. This is an illustration of the way in which isolated passages are interpreted in an arbitrary manner without taking the context into consideration, and thereby entirely missing the meaning of the passage. Other instances occur of a similar character.

We will consider next a few cases of St. Paul's use of the psalms. It is in *Romans* that this is most conspicuous. Much of this epistle is of an argumentative nature, adopted with a view to combat Jewish controversialists. For this purpose the Apostle often utilizes quotations from the psalms (mostly from the Septuagint), following a method which was Jewish in character. Thus, in chap. 3, in support of his contention that the Jews are sinners like the rest of men, and that they can claim no exemption from the consequences of sin, he quotes from half a dozen psalms, all of which, as he maintains, point to the general sinfulness of mankind (51⁴, 14¹⁻³ = 53¹⁻³, 5⁹, 140³, 107, 36¹; it will not be necessary to quote these). The central point of the whole argument is to show that no man is righteous in the sight of God, and that no amount of works of the Law can make him so. Hence man's redemption must be acquired in some other way. The string of quotations which St. Paul gives here is quite in the style of the Jewish teachers; as Edersheim¹ says: "A favourite method was that which derived its name from the stringing together of beads (*Haraz*), when a preacher,

¹ *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, I, 449 (1883).

having quoted a passage or section from the Pentateuch, strung it on to another and like-sounding, or really similar, from the Prophets and the Hagiographa". One other illustration; in Rom. 15^{9, 11}, St. Paul quotes Pss. 18⁴⁹, 117¹, and in applying them to Christ, interprets them Messianically. From the Christian point of view this is very forced exegesis; but from the Jewish standpoint there was more justification in regarding them, especially 18⁴⁹, as Messianic prophecies; thus, in the Midrash on the *Psalms* it is said, in reference to this passage, including v. 50, which belongs to it, that at "the gathering of the Israelites" David will give thanks unto the Lord among the nations; this is in reference to one of the great episodes of the Messianic Drama, according to Jewish tradition, viz., the ingathering of Israel, to which reference is made in Isa. 27¹³ (cp. Isa. 49²², 60^{4, 9}, 66²⁰), where it is said (according to the Midrash) that the Gentiles will themselves escort the exiles to their home. Passages from the psalms, like the one under consideration, exercised a great influence on Jewish Messianic ideas; the exaltation of Israel among the nations, with their idolatrous beliefs, would have had the effect of enhancing the glory of Israel with their Messianic king. That this passage was interpreted in Jewish Messianic sense is seen, further, by the Midrashic comment on the words, *And sing praises unto thy name*; these praises, it is said, are those which will be offered at the advent of the Messiah. The traditional Jewish Messianic interpretation of the psalms, much of which is undoubtedly pre-Christian, has an interest and significance for us, since there is every reason to believe that the early Christians, i.e., Jewish-Christians, were influenced by that interpretation, and applied it to our Lord.

From this point of view the use made of the psalms in the epistle to the *Hebrews* is particularly instructive. We will restrict ourselves to the first chapter, though other illustrations could be given; in this chapter there is a string of quotations somewhat similar to what we find in Rom. 3, though in this latter epistle the quotations are all from the psalms. Ps. 2⁷ is first quoted: *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee* (see also Hebr. 5⁵); this is interpreted as in reference to Christ's resurrection and Kingship. Then, in vv. 8, 9, Ps. 45^{6, 7}, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever . . .*, are applied to Christ as pointing to his divinity; similarly in vv. 10-12, where Ps. 102²⁵⁻²⁷ are quoted and interpreted as proving his divinity and eternity; this is immediately followed by Ps. 110¹, *Sit thou on my right hand . . .*, in reference to Christ's session on the divine throne. These quotations are thus used for dogmatic purposes. The same is true of the quotation from Ps. 110⁴: *Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek*, in 5⁶ (cp. 7¹⁷), in evidence of Christ's Priesthood; also of the words of Ps. 40⁶⁻⁸, *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not . . .* in 10⁵⁻⁷, as showing the uselessness of sacrifices, since Christ was the one true

Sacrifice. Lastly, there is in 13⁶ the quotation from Ps. 118⁶: *The Lord is my helper, I will not fear; what shall man do unto me?* in reference to the love of Christ. Thus, in this epistle all the quotations from the psalms are used for dogmatic purposes in regard to the Person of Christ.

In the book of *Revelation* direct quotations from the psalms rarely occur; but there are frequent incidental allusions to them; thus, e.g., in 2^{26, 27}, 12⁶, 19¹⁵, Ps. 2^{8, 9} is quoted: *He shall rule them with a rod of iron . . .*, in reference to Christ's world-rule.

It must be recognized that, speaking generally, and apart from the Synoptic Gospels, the use of the *Psalms* in the New Testament follows Jewish methods. According to this, when a passage is used for illustrative or dogmatic purposes, it is chosen for its verbal form irrespective of its real meaning.

CHAPTER XII

THE PSALMS IN THE JEWISH CHURCH

WE are concerned here only with the use of the *Psalms* in the Jewish community from the time at which they became part of the worship of the Synagogue; their earlier use is dealt with in the Commentary. This may be dated, so far as Palestine is concerned, as having begun soon after the end of the Maccabæan Wars, towards the end of the second century B.C.; there is no evidence for the existence of synagogues in Palestine prior to this date.¹ This, of course, is not to say that gatherings for worship other than in the temple were not held; that was obviously the case, see, *e.g.*, 1 Macc. 3⁴⁶; but we are referring to the Synagogue as an institution with an official liturgy. How far the *Psalms* were used in the worship of the Synagogue while the temple was still standing is a matter of uncertainty; but there are a few indications forthcoming which throw some light on the subject. Thus, after the daily morning sacrifice in the temple, the Levites sang Ps. 105¹⁻¹⁵, and after the daily evening sacrifice Ps. 96; these—and probably in course of time others were added—were taken over and used in the daily services of the Synagogue.² Again, in the Mishnah, *Tamid* vii. 4, it is said that the special psalm for each day of the week was sung by the Levites in the temple; this custom was taken over by the Synagogue; these are, for the seven days respectively: 24, 48, 82, 94, 81, 93, 92. With the exception of the third and fifth, what is here said is corroborated by the Septuagint titles to these psalms. Then, again, Pss. 145-150, which as early as the middle of the second century A.D. were an integral part of the daily synagogal service, were similarly sung daily in the temple.³ And once more, the *Hallel* psalms (113-118, the word means "Praise"), were taken over from the temple Liturgy and sung in the synagogues after morning prayer on eighteen days of the year, including those of the New Moon.⁴ These do not exhaust the indications that could be given to show how in many respects the Synagogue took over from the temple-worship the use of

¹ Synagogues in the lands of the Dispersion undoubtedly existed long before this date; on the subject in general see Oesterley, *A Fresh Approach to the Psalms*, pp. 153-165 (1937).

² *Seder Olam* xiv, mentioned by Elbogen, *Der Jüdische Gottesdienst in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, p. 82 (1913).

³ *Sopherim* XVII, 11, this is one of the so-called "smaller treatises" of the Talmud; see further below.

⁴ Elbogen, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

the psalms. It is true that nowhere is it directly said that these various psalms were used in the Synagogue while the temple was still standing; but there is good reason for believing that this was the case; it is recorded, for example, that Joshua ben Chananiah (he died in A.D. 130), a member of the Levitical choir in the temple, used to go with the choristers in a body to the synagogue from the orchestra by the altar, and so take part in both services.¹

In the many passages in the Gospels and *Acts* in which synagogues are referred to, mention is made only of teaching and of reading the Scriptures in them, but that is simply because there was no occasion to speak of the singing of psalms there; that was taken for granted; where there was worship psalms obviously had their place. Once, however, there is a definite reference to the singing of psalms; in 1 Cor. 14²⁶ it is said: "When ye come together, each hath a psalm; hath a teaching . . ." (cp. Eph. 5¹⁹, Col. 3¹⁶); it is a Christian assembly that is here in question, but as the first Christian congregations followed the procedure of the Synagogue in their form of service, this may justifiably be regarded as indirect evidence of what occurred in the Synagogue, in this respect, while the temple was still standing.

Turning now to times after the destruction of the temple, a great deal of information regarding the use of psalms in the ancient Synagogue is contained in the tractate *Sopherim* x-xxi.² According to Zunz,³ this important tractate belongs to the period of the *Geonim*,⁴ A.D. 589 onwards; it gives details of the traditional use of the *Psalms* in the Synagogue, and therefore what it says applies to the previous centuries. Some of the details given are worth recording, for they tell us what psalms were used on special occasions, why they were chosen, and other points of interest; we shall, of course, not restrict ourselves here to this tractate.

First, mention may be made of the use of the *Hallel* (Pss. 113-118); in the Jewish liturgy it is treated as a single composition; it was known also as the "Hallel of Egypt", from the opening words of Ps. 114, "When Israel went forth from Egypt", in order to distinguish it from the "Great Hallel", Ps. 136. The ancient way of reciting this was for the leader to begin with "Hallelujah", which was repeated by the congregation; then after each half-verse the congregation fell in with "Hallelujah", which was thus said 123 times.⁵ In course of time this method of recitation was altered in different countries.⁶

¹ Bab. Talmud, 'Arakhin, 11 b.

² The text, with notes, has been published by Joel Müller, *Masseket Soferim, der Talmudische Traktat der Schreiber* . . . (1878).

³ *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*, p. 101 (1892).

⁴ The plural of *Gaon*, "excellency"; this was the title given to the heads of the two leading Academies of Babylonia, namely Sura and Pumbeditha; the period is reckoned as lasting to the early part of the eleventh century.

⁵ Cp. *Sopherim* xvi. 11, 12.

⁶ Elbogen, *op. cit.*, p. 496.

We are told that the "Hallel", as well as other psalms, was known by heart by the congregation.¹ It has always occupied a place of peculiar importance in the Jewish Church, and the custom of singing it at the great festivals was, as we have said, taken over from the temple-worship to that of the synagogue. But in addition to the "Hallel", proper psalms were appointed to be sung at these festivals, and these psalms were chosen because in each case they contained something appropriate to the occasion; thus for *Pesah* ("Passover")² the special psalm was 135, and this was chosen on account of *vv.* 8, 9, "He smote the first-born of Egypt . . ." The festival of *Shabu'oth* ("Weeks" = Pentecost)³ was regarded as the Feast of the Revelation of the glory of God, *Ezek.* i. being one of the special lessons; hence the proper psalm was 29, where "the voice of Yahweh" is explained as the manifestation of "the God of glory". For the festival of *Sukk'oth* ("Tabernacles")⁴ the special psalm was 76, chosen on account of *v.* 2 (3): "In Salem also in his tabernacle" (*Sukkah*), for this festival was celebrated, according to *Lev.* 23^{42, 43}, in commemoration of the way in which the Israelites dwelt in "booths" (*Sukk'oth*) during their journey through the wilderness. The eighth day of this feast was of special importance, the proper psalm for which was 12; mention is also made of 111 as an alternative; as the whole period of this festival was regarded as "the season of our rejoicing", the former was probably chosen on account of *vv.* 5 and 7, where Yahweh's guardianship is spoken of; in the case of the latter, the whole psalm is thoroughly appropriate to a time of rejoicing. In the celebrations of each of these great festivals some other psalms were also sung or said; but the more important details have been indicated. Then, as to the lesser feasts, the special psalms for the New Moon⁵ were 98 and 104; the former on account of the reference to the *shôphar* ("ram's-horn") in *v.* 5, which, according to *Num.* 10¹⁰, was to be sounded "in the beginnings of your months"; the whole of *Ps.* 104 is appropriate to this occasion, but *v.* 19 is particularly pointed: "He made the moon for appointed seasons". At the feast of Dedication (*Hannukkah*), called also the "feast of the Maccabees" (see 1 *Macc.* 4⁵⁹, 2 *Macc.* 1¹⁸), *Ps.* 30 was appointed; ⁶ it is probably owing to this that the title "A Song at the Dedication of the House" was added; ⁷ the appropriateness of the psalm for this occasion is obvious. At the feast of *Purim* ("Lots", cp. *Esther* 9²⁴) the special psalm was 7, chosen because it speaks of vengeance on the adversary ⁸ (*vv.* 6, 11-16, and see *Esther* 9^{13a}); in the Midrash *Tehillim*, "Cush the Benjaminite", mentioned in the title of this psalm, is said to refer to Saul.

¹ Müller, *op. cit.*, p. 263.² *Sopherim* xviii. 3.³ *Sopherim* xvii. 11.⁴ Elbogen, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

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⁵ *Sopherim* xviii. 2.⁶ *Sopherim* xix. 2.⁷ *Sopherim* xviii. 2, see also xx. 8.⁸ *Sopherim* xviii. 2.

Coming now to the Sabbath, as we should expect, psalms occupied an important part in the services. From early times the Sabbath has been specially connected with the work of creation, and with the deliverance from Egypt, when Israel became a nation. In all the special Sabbath psalms, therefore, verses occur in which, either directly or indirectly, reference is made to one or other of these. It cannot be said for certain which these psalms were in the earliest days of the Synagogue; but there can be little doubt that traditional usage has, in the main, been followed. Unfortunately, the tractate *Sopherim* gives no details on this subject. In the earliest rituals, however, the special Sabbath psalms for the Morning Service are: 19, 92, 93, 100, 135, 136, not necessarily in this order; for the Evening Service, 67 and 144. In addition there was, and is, the service for the Sanctification (*Qiddush*) of the Sabbath, with Pss. 29, 92, 95-99; and the service for the Conclusion (*Habdalah*, lit. "Separation") of the Sabbath, when Pss. 67 and 144 are again used.

Turning now to the fast-days; there is first the Day of Atonement (*Yôm Kippûr*, see Lev. 22²³⁻³², 23^{31, 32}); one of the appointed psalms was 130 ("Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, Yahweh"),¹ and here again the appropriateness is evident; the other was 103, containing several verses which would greatly appeal on this day, the last of the annual "ten days of penitence",² namely, *vv.* 3, 8-13. As in the case of the festivals, early usage has undergone much modification in the choice of psalms, as in other respects, during subsequent centuries. There are certain other lesser fast-days which have been observed by the Jewish Church for many centuries, and for which special psalms were used. It is not possible to say for certain what these psalms were, especially because of the fact that custom varied here in different countries; but in indicating the use of the modern synagogue it is highly probable, we may feel sure, that traditional use has been followed. First, there is the *Fast of Gedaliah* (Tisri 3), observed in memory of Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, who was murdered by Ishmael (Jer. 41²); at the Morning Service on this day the special psalms are 20, 25, 83, at the Evening Service 20, 25, 102; in each of these verses occur which may be regarded as appropriate to the occasion. The *Fast of Tebeth*,³ the tenth day of this month commemorates the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem, the special psalm being 74, which opens with the words: "O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever?" The Fast of *Tammuz*, on the seventeenth day of the month, is observed in memory of the first breach made in the wall during the siege,

¹ *Sopherim* xix. 2.

² The Jewish Year opens with a penitential period consisting of "ten days of penitence" (*asārâh yēmê teshûbah*), a kind of Advent season.

³ From the Babylonian *Tebetû*, the tenth month, described as the month of violent rains.

the special psalm is 79, beginning: "O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem in heaps". And lastly the, *Fast of Ab*, on the ninth day of the month; according to Rabbinical tradition, both the first and the second temples were destroyed on this day, hence its observance; the special psalm is 137: "By the waters of Babylon, there we wept, when we remembered Zion".

In addition to what has been said, it has always been the custom for verses from different psalms to be used in various parts of the services as versicles.

It will thus be seen that in the Jewish Church the liturgical use of the *Psalms* has been, as we should expect, of quite outstanding importance. A matter of considerable interest must, however, be added. It has always been recognized that not all the psalms, owing either to their form, or content, or spirit, were adapted to public worship, and that, indeed, many of them were never intended for this purpose. As a result, the psalms used in the Synagogue-worship—and it may be confidently asserted that the same applied to the Temple-worship—were, and still are, restricted in number. In the modern Synagogue only about one-half of the psalms are used; such psalms as 35, 37, 45, 58, 78, 109, for instance, not being regarded as acceptable for public worship. There is every reason to believe that the early Church exercised similar discrimination (see below).

We have so far dealt with the public use of the *Psalms* in the Jewish Church; it will not be without interest if we consider, quite briefly, the place of a number of psalms in private, or quasi-private, use. How far back, in the cases to be mentioned, the use of a psalm, or psalms, goes, cannot be stated; but it is certain that Jewish usages in these matters have a long history behind them; so that although we shall give the custom of the Jewish Church at the present day, we may feel confident that it reflects that of ancient times. There is a certain amount of difference of usage between the two divisions of orthodox Jews, the *Sephardim* and the *Ashkenazim*,¹ but this is not of great importance. At the ceremony of a circumcision the Sephardic Jews use Ps. 128: "Happy is everyone that feareth Yahweh, that walketh in his ways"; while the Ashkenazic Jews say Ps. 12, chosen, no doubt, because of the words of vv. 6, 7. The Marriage Service opens with the versicles: "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of Yahweh, we bless you from the house of Yahweh" (118²⁶); "O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before Yahweh our maker" (95⁶); and: "Serve Yahweh with fear, and rejoice with trembling" (2¹¹).

¹ The term *Sephardim* comes from Sepharad (Obad. 20), identified with Spain, and referred originally to the Spanish and Portuguese Jews; that of *Ashkenazim*, from Ashkenaz the son of Gomer (Gen. 10³), was first used in reference to the Jews of Germany. Both terms date from mediæval times.

These are followed by Ps. 100, and at the conclusion of the ceremony Ps. 150 is said. It is a touching custom according to which the husband recites frequently Ps. 128 when the time is drawing near for his wife to be delivered of a child; the appropriateness of this is pointed (see *vv.* 3, 4). Then, again, the special psalm for the Burial Service is 16: "Preserve me, O God, for in thee do I put my trust". In the Sephardic ritual, when the coffin is lowered into the grave, Ps. 91 is said: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty". In the house of mourning Ps. 49 is said; and the Sephardic Jews have the curious custom of reciting those sections of the acrostic Ps. 119 of which the letters make up the name of the departed.

The echo of an extremely ancient custom is observed by holding a service at the consecration of a house. At this service Pss. 15, 30, 101, 121 are said, and if there are children in the family, Pss. 127, 128, are added, the reason being obvious (see 127³⁻⁵, 128³⁻⁶). In addition to these, the four sections of Ps. 119 are said, the initial letters of which make up the Hebrew word for "Blessing", viz., *vv.* 9-16, 153-160, 81-88, 33-40, in this order. The Sephardic Jews, on the other hand, use only Pss. 30, 134.

A few points of minor interest may be added. In the Talmud (*Berakhoth* 4 *b*) it is written: "He who says Ps. 145 three times daily may rest assured that he will inherit the life eternal"; the reason given being that this psalm is regarded in the light of a prayer for all flesh; and the material blessings granted by the Almighty (*vv.* 8, 9, 15, 16) are an earnest of the far greater spiritual blessings to be enjoyed hereafter. Again, Ps. 30 is said by many devout worshippers while "laying the Tephillin" before divine service; this is the technical term used for binding on the head- and hand-Tephillah or "phylactery" (cp. Matth. 23⁵); the psalm is presumably chosen on account of the words of *v.* 11 (12): "Thou hast loosed my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness". The phylacteries were worn in accordance with what was understood to be commanded in Deut. 6⁸: "And thou shalt bind them [*i.e.*, the words of God] for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes" (cp. Deut. 11¹⁸, Exod. 13^{9, 16}).

Psalms have been used for the most diverse purposes, but the most curious has been their magical use. Nowhere is this shown forth in more detailed fashion than in the *Sepher Shimmush Tehillim*,¹ "The Book of the use of the Psalms"; to deal with this in any detail would be out of place here; but a few illustrations may be offered to show the belief in the efficacy of reciting psalms, held in past days. Under Ps. 3 it is said: "Whosoever is subject to severe headache and

¹ Edit. Heldenheim (1852); see also Blau, *Das Altjüdische Zauberbwesen* (1898).

backache, let him pray this psalm . . . over a small quantity of olive oil; anoint the head and back while in the act of prayer; this will afford immediate relief". As a cure for sick boys Ps. 9 is recommended; it has to be written on pure parchment, with a new writing instrument, and hung round the neck of the sufferer. A sovereign remedy against an evil spirit is Ps. 10; "let him fill", it is said, "a new earthen pot with water from the spring, and, in the name of the patient pour into it pure olive oil, and pronounce over it this psalm nine times . . ." The belief that demons have a horror of water is extremely ancient, the reason being that it is the cleansing element (cp. Matth. 12⁴³). To give but one other illustration; concerning Ps. 109 it is said: "If you have a mighty enemy, who plagues and oppresses you, fill a new jug with new sparkling wine, add some mustard to it, then repeat this psalm three days consecutively; at the same time keep in mind the holy name of *El*; afterwards, pour the moisture before the door of your enemy's dwelling. But be careful that you do not sprinkle a single drop upon yourself when in the act of pouring it out;" this will effectually cause the enemy to cease worrying.

Further illustrations would be wearisome; but every single one of the psalms is recommended to be recited as a cure for evils of one kind or another. Pathetic as this all is, it does witness to an extraordinary belief in the efficacy of the mere recitation of psalms; so that even in the secular affairs of life they played an important part.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PSALMS IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

As the first Christians (Jewish-Christians) worshipped in the temple or in the synagogue, it must be assumed that they followed the traditional usage of the Jewish Church in the singing or reciting of psalms. But this can have lasted only as long as the Christian community was confined to Jerusalem. Not later than the year 50, when the apostolic missionary activities brought them into the Gentile world, the psalms would necessarily have been said in Greek; and this took place first of all in Antioch: "The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11²⁶, cp. v. 20). Greek was then the universal language.¹ In the Septuagint the daily psalm is indicated in the respective titles. As the Septuagint was the Bible of the early Church, and was repudiated by the Jewish Church, it is permissible to assume that the daily psalm thus indicated (they do not all correspond with the Hebrew titles) was in accordance with the usage of the Church, at any rate at first. But otherwise we have no information about the use of psalms in Christian worship in the earliest age. Apart from this daily psalm, however, it is probable that no definite system of dividing the psalms into daily, weekly, or monthly, portions was in existence; for all the evidence, as soon as it becomes available, shows that there was much variety in this in different localities; this is hardly likely to have been the case if any fixed method had been adopted by the Church of the first century. When Tertullian says (*Apologia* xxxi. 3) that the psalms were taken over from the Synagogue by the Christians in their worship, and used in all parts of the world, he is speaking of the psalms in general, not to any systematic method of recitation.

There are certain indications which support Tertullian's statement in an interesting way. In the account of the Sunday Vigil Service, which occurs in the *Peregrinatio Etheriæ* (it is quoted below), the component parts of the service are: alternate praise (a psalm) and prayer; then the central prayer portion, the "commemoration of all"; after that the reading of Scripture, concluding with praise (a psalm) and prayer; then the final blessing. This corresponds in the main outline with the earliest form of service in the Synagogue service.

¹ Tertullian (end of second century) refers to the fact that the Jews of Egypt used the Septuagint in their synagogues there (*Apologia* xviii).

When it is realized that the *Peregrinatio* is describing the form of service as held in Jerusalem in the fourth century, it is difficult to believe that we have here a mere coincidence. It seems far more likely that we may discern a confirmation of what Tertullian says. In another respect it is probable that the use of the psalms in the early Church was taken over from the Synagogue. A very ancient element in the Synagogue-worship, adapted almost certainly from the Temple-worship, was the use of versicles from the psalms. Similarly in different parts of the early Church Liturgies appropriate verses from psalms were said. For instance, Cyril, in his *Catecheses* (xix-xxiii), delivered in 348, gives some account of the Syrian Liturgy, and tells us, among much else, that during the communion of the worshippers the verse was sung: "O taste and see . . ." (Ps. 34⁸). In the Gallican Liturgy, three verses from this psalm were sung at this part of the service (*vv.* 8, 1, 22), after each of which followed a threefold "Hallelujah". This was called by Germanus the *Trecanum*, and expressed, according to him, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.¹ Or again, in the various ancient Liturgies, after the Bishop has proclaimed the "Holy things for holy persons", a response is made which contains quotations from Ps. 118²⁵⁻²⁷. The use of these and other phrases from the *Hallel* psalms, which have also suggested much other liturgical language, support Bickell's theory that the *Anaphora* was originally modelled on the *Hallel*.²

Interesting again is the definite statement of Socrates (*Hist. Eccles.* vi. 8) that Ignatius (end of first century) introduced antiphonal singing of the psalms in accordance with a tradition of the Church of Antioch; but nothing is said about the number of psalms to be recited daily. How abundant their use was, however, may be gathered from the words of Chrysostom (*circa* 345-407): "If we keep vigil in the Church, David comes first, last, and midst. If, early in the morning, we seek for the melody of hymns, first, last, and midst is David again. If we are occupied with the funeral solemnities of the departed, if virgins sit at home and spin, David is first, last, and midst. . . . In the monasteries, amongst those holy choirs of angelic armies, David is first, last, and midst. In the convents of virgins, where are bands of them that imitate Mary; in the deserts, where are men crucified to this world and having their conversations with God, first, midst, and last is he."³ The expression used regarding the saying, or singing of psalms ("first, last, and midst"), is perhaps to be understood in the light of what was ordered by the seventeenth canon of the Council of Laodiceæ

¹ Duchesne, *Origines du Culte Chrétien*, p. 215 (1908).

² *Messe und Pascha*, Engl. transl. by Skene, *The Lord's Supper and the Passover Ritual*, pp. 86 ff. (1891).

³ Quoted by Neale and Littledale, *Commentary on the Psalms*, p. 1 (1860).

(fourth century) to the effect that the psalms were to be sung interspersed with Scripture lessons instead of being sung consecutively. With this we may compare the somewhat different usage recorded in the *Peregrinatio Etheriæ* (fourth century); it is taken from the Sunday Offices, *Vigil*: "And when the people have entered in, someone among the priests says a psalm, and all respond; after this prayer is made. Then someone among the deacons says a psalm, and similarly prayer is made. Then a third psalm is said by one of the clerics, and a third prayer is made, and there is a commemoration of all. . . . Then, the Gospel having been read, the bishop goes out, and is led with hymns to the Cross, and all the people with him. There again one psalm is said, and prayer is made. Thereupon he blesses the faithful, and the Dismissal takes place (*et fit missa*)."¹ The psalms here alternate with prayer, not with lessons; but it bears out the principle that during divine service psalms should not be said consecutively. At other times, however, the recitation of a number of psalms, no doubt said consecutively, was considered an act of meritorious piety, for Cassian (died 435) tells us—and this illustrates the variation in local usage—that in the choice of the number of psalms to be said daily in monasteries there was a difference of twenty and thirty; while in monasteries in Egypt as many as fifty, or even sixty, were read in a day (*Institut. Coenobit.*, ii. 2, v). In the early Western Church (sixth century) the system of Gregory—and the same is true of the Benedictine rule (sixth century)—was carried out, the whole of the Psalter being gone through in the course of seven days. This is found, too, in somewhat later times; among mediæval Service Books was the *Psalterium*, containing the *Psalms* divided into different portions, according to variations in different localities; but in all cases the Psalter was read through in the course of a week; they were said at the Hours services.² It may be added that candidates for ordination were required to know the whole Psalter by heart; Gennadius, Patriarch of Constantinople (494), refused to ordain anyone who could not recite the Psalter by heart. Canons to the same effect were passed at the Eighth Council of Toledo (653), and at the Council of Orviedo (1050). Nothing could show more eloquently the immense importance attached to a knowledge of the psalms by the Church. And this may be illustrated by one further detail: the mediæval Church, in its use of the seven penitential psalms, referred each to what were held to be the seven deadly sins; the saying of each of these psalms was believed to act as a deterrent against committing these sins; thus Ps. 6, *contra iram*; Ps. 32, *contra superbiam*; Ps. 38, *contra gulam*; Ps. 51, *contra luxuriam*; Ps. 102, *contra avaritiam*; Ps. 130, *contra invidiam*; Ps. 143,

¹ Quoted from Duchesne, *op. cit.*, pp. 473 f. (1889).

² Maskell, *Monumenta Ritualia* . . . , I, xli. (1882).

contra acediam. These psalms were not regarded as penitential by the Eastern Church.

The most complete and regular recitation of psalms began when the "Canonical Hours" of Prayer were introduced, in their final form, in the Christian Church. It is not known when this first took place; but the system originated in the Eastern Church, from which it was taken over by the Western Church probably some time during the sixth century. At each of the eight services psalms were read: at *Nocturns*, probably a night service, but corresponding to the *Matins* of later days, twelve psalms were read in course; at *Lauds*, *Prime*, *Tierce*, *Sext*, *Nones*, fixed psalms were said: at *Vespers*, the evening service, four or five psalms were read in course, while at *Compline*, the bed-time service, several fixed psalms were read. The "Canonical Hours" were for the monasteries and the clergy; but devotional books for the laity were not wanting; they went under the name of *Horæ*, the most popular being the "Hours of the Blessed Virgin". The devotional books varied much in content, but psalms always occupied a prominent place. These *Horæ* became in later days the basis of the devotional book for the laity known in the fourteenth century as the *Prymer*. So far as psalms were concerned, this book contained the seven penitential psalms, the "fifteen" psalms (120-134), and what are called "the psalms of Commendations" (119, the divisions being regarded as separate psalms).¹ When this *Prymer* is compared with that of the *Prymer* of Henry VIII (1545), it may be said that "for one hundred and fifty years preceding the Reformation, and probably for a much longer period, the *Prymer* was the book authorized by the English Church for the private devotion of the people".² We have drawn attention to this in order to emphasize the fact that the *Psalms* had an important place in the devotional life not only of the clergy, but also of the laity.

These details, being but a few of a great number that could be offered, will suffice to give some idea of the abundant use of the *Psalms* in the Christian Church. It is unnecessary to discuss their use in the Reformed Churches, as this is sufficiently well known. But a final word may be said about the Psalter in the *Book of Common Prayer*, since among English-speaking people this Version is probably the most familiar.

In his important account of the Old Latin Version,³ Burkitt says that "Latin versions of the Scriptures can be traced back into the second century"; but he continues: "No *tradition* of the origin or literary history of the Latin versions seems to have been known even

¹ Maskell, *op. cit.*; III, 90 ff.

² Procter, *A History of the Book of Common Prayer*, p. 15 (1889).

³ *Encycl. Bibl.*, IV, 4992 ff. (1903).

to Augustine or Jerome; it remains an open question whether the first translation was made in Roman Africa, in Italy, or in Gaul. What is certain is that by the middle of the fourth century, Latin Biblical MSS. exhibited a most confusing variety of text. . . . In classifying our Old Latin authorities each group of books must be treated separately." In the *Psalms*, he says, "we find a maze of aberrant texts". The Old Latin version, a daughter-version of the Septuagint, was revised by Jerome (383); but of the Psalter he made, at different times, three versions, known as the Roman, the Gallican, and the Hebrew; the second of these ultimately superseded the others, and became the Psalter of the Western Church. It was translated by Jerome from Origen's *Hexapla*, when he was living at Bethlehem (389), and was brought to Gaul by Gregory of Tours; later it was brought over to England, where it superseded the older Latin Psalter, and was used ultimately throughout the Church in England. The Prayer-Book Psalter is a translation of this Gallican Psalter, but not wholly, for a number of translations were made of it into Anglo-Saxon and mediæval English at different times, until at last an authorized edition of the Bible was issued (Cranmer's Bible or the "Great Bible," 1540); the *Psalms* were, however, with some slight revision, taken from the Gallican Psalter. This will explain why the Prayer-Book version of the *Psalms*, beautiful as it is in the main, differs in many passages from the Hebrew text.

CHAPTER XIV

THE HISTORY OF THE EXEGESIS OF THE PSALMS

So far as the New Testament is concerned, this subject is dealt with in Chap. XI. We begin, therefore, with the method of exegesis of the teachers of the second century A.D. It will be readily understood that nothing in the shape of a commentary is to be looked for during this early period. The method of exegesis adopted by the early Church Fathers must be gathered from their incidental use and explanation of passages from the *Psalms* which occur in their writings. They used, of course, the Septuagint Version—the Bible of the early Church. It is somewhat surprising to find how very little use is made of the *Psalms* by these writers as compared with their use of the other books of the Old Testament. The reason for this may have been that inasmuch as the Psalter, from the earliest times, was the hymn-book of the Church, used during divine service, it was, as it were, outside the category of Biblical books in the ordinary sense. The lack of the use of the *Psalms* in the writings of the early Church Fathers may also be due, in part, to the fact that Scripture was primarily an apologetic weapon, and though there was a good deal in the *Psalms* which, later, was used in a Messianic sense, this did not at first appear. However this may be, among the second-century Church writers, with the exception of the *First Epistle of Clement*, and the *Epistle of Barnabas*, there are hardly any quotations from the *Psalms* in their writings; none in the so-called *Second Epistle of Clement* or in the *Didaché*, only two in the *Epistles of Ignatius*, and two in the *Epistle of Polycarp*; there are incidental references to passages in the *Shepherd of Hermas*, but very rarely actual quotations. For illustrations of exegesis we must, therefore, have recourse to the *First Epistle of Clement* and the *Epistle of Barnabas*. In the great majority of cases in the former quotations from the *Psalms* are given in illustration of precepts of a practical nature, whether exhortations to right living or warnings against wrong-doing; so that a passage is taken in its literal sense, and explained accordingly. On the other hand, in about a dozen instances passages are explained as in reference to our Lord; for example, Ps. 3⁵, *I laid me down and slept; I awaked, for Yahweh sustaineth me*, is interpreted as referring to our Lord's resurrection (xxvi. 2). Again Ps. 34¹¹⁻¹⁷, *Come, ye children, hearken unto me . . .*, is explained as the utterance of our Lord himself, which he spoke

"through his Holy Spirit" (xxii. 1). Similarly, it is stated that our Lord said in reference to himself: *But I am a worm and no man . . .* (Ps. 22⁶⁻⁸), and it is added: "Ye see, beloved, what is the example that hath been given to us; for if the Lord was humble-minded, what shall we do who, through him, have come under the yoke of his grace" (xvi. 15-17). In the *Epistle of Barnabas* much the same line is followed; but here and there passages are explained in support of doctrinal teaching. Thus, *And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water . . .* (Ps. 1³⁻⁶) is interpreted as referring to baptism (xi. 6-8). A quaint piece of exegesis occurs in x. 1, 9, 10, which is worth quoting because it illustrates the arbitrary method of exegesis whereby a text could be made to mean anything required, a method which was widely adopted as time went on. It is in explanation of Ps. 1¹: first a summary is given of the food laws in Lev. xi; then it continues: "Now, in that Moses said, 'Ye shall not eat swine, nor an eagle, nor a hawk, nor a crow, nor any fish which hath no scales on itself', he included three doctrines in his understanding"; then, in reference to this it is said a little further on: "Moses received three doctrines concerning food, and thus spake of them in the Spirit; but they [*i.e.*, the Israelites], according to the lust of the flesh, received them as concerning [material] food. But David received knowledge concerning the same three doctrines, and said: 'Blessed is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly', as the fishes go in darkness in the deep waters; and, 'and hath not stood in the way of sinners', like those who appear to fear the Lord, but sin like the swine; and 'and hath not sat in the seat of the scorers', like the birds who sit and wait for their prey". That gives some idea of the fantastic kind of exegesis which becomes increasingly prevalent; at the same time, the principle of explaining scripture by the Scriptures is a sound one when rationally employed; and in later times was often adopted with good effect. In general, however, in regard to the earliest post-Biblical writings, it may be said that two central purposes are to be observed in the use of the *Psalms*, and their exegesis: (a) to discern, wherever possible, a prophecy of our Lord, or an allusion to him; and (b) to use them as an authoritative guide for conduct of life.

Here a brief reference must be made to the exegetical methods of Philo on account of the great influence which they had on the Church Fathers; ¹ he lived during the first half of the first century A.D. Philo sought to harmonize Greek wisdom with Hebrew religion; though scorned by the orthodox among his own people, his work came to be highly regarded by Christian exegetes. He dealt mainly with the

¹ See Siegfried, *Philo von Alexandria als Ausleger des Alten Testaments . . .*, pp. 303 ff. (1875).

Pentateuch, but his rules of exegesis applied, of course, to all the Scriptures. According to his teaching, the literal sense of a passage must, in the first instance, be determined; but it is of far greater importance that it should be interpreted allegorically, for therein lies its true meaning; he compares the literal and the allegorical with the body and soul of man.¹ Philo's influence appears especially in the writings of the Alexandrian Christian teachers. Pantænus (*circa* A.D. 200), the founder of the celebrated School of Alexandria, was, according to Eusebius (*Eccles. Hist.* v. 10), the first to write a commentary on the *Psalms*. The same authority tells us that there followed next a commentary by Origen (vi. 24), who became the father of the allegorical method in the Church. Of all the Church Fathers, however, none exercised such a lasting influence on the writers who followed him as Augustine; he adopted the seven exegetical rules of Tyconius.² Allegorical interpretation naturally played a very important part, but Augustine frequently explains a passage in a figurative sense. An illustration of his exegetical method may be offered: in explaining Ps. 51¹⁸⁻²⁰ (50¹⁶⁻¹⁸, in the Septuagint), he remarks that when the psalmist said "that God did not require one kind of sacrifice, he showed that he required another kind. For he does not require the sacrifice of a slain beast, but the sacrifice of a sorrowing heart. The sacrifice, therefore, that God does not demand, *i.e.*, the slain beast, is merely the symbol of the sacrifice which he does demand, *i.e.*, the sorrowing heart. God does not require sacrifices, then, to gratify his own pleasure, as some are foolish enough to imagine; and had he not wished that the sacrifice of a sorrowing heart should be symbolized by the sacrifices of slain beasts, the latter had never been ordered by the Law. Moreover, the passing and temporary nature of these old covenant sacrifices is a proof of their symbolical nature, and is a warning to us not to imagine that the sacrifices themselves, rather than the things symbolized by them, were acceptable to God" (*De Civ. Dei*, x, 5). Other passages would, of course, demand different methods of interpretation, literal, historical, allegorical, in accordance with the rules adopted from Tyconius, but space forbids our giving illustrations of these. Augustine's methods were, in the main, followed by all the Church teachers during the Middle Ages. It will not be necessary to go into details regarding the work of these; as has been pointed out by various modern writers on the subject, the fourfold meaning of Scripture discerned by mediæval scholars in general is succinctly expressed by the following saying: *Litera gesta docet, quid credas allegoria, moralis quid agas, quo tendas anagogia*, which may be freely paraphrased: "The literal sense teaches facts,

¹ See further, Siegfried, *op. cit.*, pp. 168 ff., 196 f.

² Dealt with by Burkitt, *The Book of the Rules of Tyconius*, pp. xv ff. (1894).

allegory dictates belief, the moral sense guides as to right living, spiritual elevation is the final goal ”.

In the field of Jewish exegesis mention must be made of the labours of the “ Masoretic ” (Masora = “ tradition ”) scholars who prepared the way for a closer and more literal exposition of the Biblical text. Though great care had always been taken in preserving a correct Hebrew text of the Old Testament Scriptures by the Scribes, exegetical studies received a powerful impetus in the seventh century, when vowel-signs were introduced. Henceforward Masoretic studies steadily developed, and the body of Masoretic tradition—all concerned with the exact determination and preservation of the Biblical text—steadily grew for centuries. It must, however, be noted that as early as about A.D. 800 great opposition arose against all Rabbinical interpretation and tradition on the part of the heretical Karaite ¹ sect. The Karaites undertook a most minute and critical study of the Biblical text; and in order to oppose and refute the Karaite teaching, the Rabbis had to undertake a similar task. This dual critical study developed into a very keen contest between Rabbinic and Karaite champions; and there is no doubt that the bulk of the work of a final and authoritative text must be assigned to the heretical Karaites. That this ultimately contributed powerfully to the whole study of exegesis among both Jewish and Christian scholars needs no emphasis. We need but add that the “ Masoretic ” text is that of the Hebrew Bible at the present day; and it is also that from which the Old Testament in English is translated.

A brief reference may be made next to some outstanding mediæval Jewish exegetes, since their work was not without influence on Christian scholars. First, there was Saadia ben Joseph (died A.D. 942), who, while not altogether ignoring tradition, laid special stress on *reason* as the basis of interpretation and exegesis; hence he insisted, among other things, that Scriptural passages must be explained in the light of their context. Self-evident as this appears to us, it must be realized that this method was a great advance on what had preceded; and even at the present day it is not always followed, as when isolated texts are sometimes torn from their context and given a meaning which would be seen to be false if the context were taken into consideration. Saadia translated, with commentary, the whole of the Old Testament into Arabic; Margulies, in his dissertation published in 1884, has translated the *Psalms* portion into German.

Somewhat later there was the celebrated exegete Solomon bar Isaac, better known as Rashi (an abbreviation of *Rabbi Shelomo Izchaki*, the Hebrew form of his name); he died in A.D. 1105. He,

¹ The Hebrew form of the name is *Beni Migra*, “ Sons of Reading ”, i.e., of the Scriptures.

too, respected the traditional exegesis, making much use of the Targums; but, like Saadia, he sought for the plain, straightforward meaning of a text, and did not ignore its context. His special contribution, however, was the stress he laid on the need of bringing linguistic knowledge into account in seeking to explain Scripture. He wrote a commentary on the *Psalms*, which Breithaupt published in 1713.

Here mention must be made of the *Midrash* on the *Psalms*; it is approximately of the same time as Rashi, *i.e.* belonging to about the eleventh century, and known as *Midrash Tehillim*; it is also called *Shocheh Tob* ("He that diligently seeketh good", Prov. 11²⁷), from the opening words of the book. Although comparatively late in date, it contains a great deal of extremely valuable ancient material, its special interest being that it has preserved much of the traditional Palestinian exegesis of the *Psalms*. The homiletic method of exegesis characteristic of it may not appeal to us, yet it is not without interest; the following illustration gives a parable by way of explaining Ps. 2¹², *Kiss the son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way*: "Whereunto is this to be compared? It is like a king who was wrath against the inhabitants of a city; these, therefore, went unto the king's son and made their peace with him, in order that he might go to the king and make peace on their behalf. So he went and pacified the king. When the inhabitants of that city knew that the king had been propitiated, they desired to sing a song (of thanksgiving) to him; but he answered and said: 'Do ye wish to sing a song (of thanksgiving) to me? Nay, but go and sing it unto my son, for had it not been for him, I should have destroyed the inhabitants of the city'."

This illustrates the essential tendency of homiletical exegesis, which is characteristic of this *Midrash*. Another comment occurring in this *Midrash* may be quoted as giving a good insight into a somewhat different line of interpretation; the passage Ps. 84⁴⁻⁶ is thus explained: "*What is man that thou art mindful of him?* This refers to Abraham, as it is written in Gen. 19²⁹, 'When God destroyed the cities of the Plain, God remembered Abraham'. *And the son of man that thou visitest him?* This refers to Isaac, as it is written in Gen. 21¹, 'And Yahweh visited Sarah, as he had said'. *For thou hast made him but little lower than Elohim.* This refers to Jacob, as it is written in Gen. 30³⁹, 'And the flocks conceived before the rods'; Jacob was able to cause the flocks to bring forth ringstraked, speckled, and spotted, thus possessing almost divine power, but he was a little lower than Elohim because he could not give them souls. *And crownest him with glory and honour.* This refers to Moses, as it is written in Exod. 34²⁹, 'Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone by reason of his speaking with him'. *Thou madest him to have dominion over*

the works of thy hands. This refers to Joshua, as it is written in Josh. 10^{12, 13}, 'Then spake Joshua . . . Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, Moon, in the valley of Aijalon . . .' *Thou hast put all things under his feet.* This refers to David, as it is written in 2 Sam. 22⁴³, 'Then did I beat them small as the dust of the earth, I did stamp them as the mire of the streets'. *All sheep and oxen.* This refers to Solomon, as it is written in 4³³ (Hebr. 5¹³), 'He spake also of beasts'. *Yea, the beasts of the field.* This refers to Samson, as it is written in Judg. 15⁴, 'And Samson went out and caught three hundred foxes . . .' *The fowl of the air.* This refers to Elijah, as it is written in 1 Kgs. 17⁶, 'And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning . . .' *And the fish of the sea.* This refers to Jonah, as it is written in Jon. 2¹, 'Then Jonah prayed unto Yahweh his God out of the fish's belly'. *Whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.* This refers to the Israelites, as it is written in Exod. 15¹⁹, 'The children of Israel walked on dry land in the midst of the sea'."

We have quoted this in full as illustrating the kind of exegetical ingenuity whereby Scriptural texts may be made to mean anything that is desired. It is a method not restricted to Jewish exegesis. But that by the way.

Not long after the time of Rashi arose the eminent scholar Abraham Ibn Ezra (he died in 1167). His exegetical methods followed those of his great predecessor, his special contribution being that by his intimate knowledge of the Hebrew language he was able to throw much fresh light on Biblical texts. "In his commentaries", says Israel Abrahams, "he rejected the current digressive and allegorical methods, and steered a middle course between free research on the one hand, and blind adherence to tradition on the other. . . . He never for a moment doubted, however, that the Bible was in every part inspired, and in every part the word of God."¹ He, too, wrote a commentary on the *Psalms*, though restricted to the first ten (published by Fagius in 1542). A contemporary of Ibn Ezra was David Kimchi, who likewise sought primarily for the natural meaning of Scripture, laying great stress on the help afforded by grammatical knowledge. His commentary on the first book of the *Psalms* was published by Schiller-Szinessy in 1883; this is in Hebrew.²

These Jewish exegetical scholars are mentioned because of the use made of their works by mediæval Christian scholars, and even more by those of later times.

We come next to the Reformation period. It is unnecessary to enumerate the various commentaries on the *Psalms* which appeared

¹ *A Short History of Jewish Literature*, p. 69 (1906).

² For much information on the Jewish exegetes, see Bacher, *Die jüdische Biblexegese* . . ., pp. 68 ff. (1892).

during this period. The outstanding names are Luther and Calvin, both of whom wrote commentaries on the *Psalms* which influenced, more or less, all the teachers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The main characteristics which mark the exegetical methods of scholars during these centuries are: a reaction against the allegorical interpretation of Scripture; concentration on the literal meaning of the text, aided especially by its grammatical sense; and the principle that Scripture must be explained by Scripture. Luther, for example, strongly contended that the teaching as to the fourfold meaning of Scripture (see above) was a delusion; only the literal, grammatical sense was decisive; he conceded an allegorical interpretation only where the inspired writers themselves employed it. Protestant scholars had the great advantage over those of the Roman Church in that they took the Hebrew text as the basis of their study, whereas the latter relied on the often faulty translation of the Vulgate. It was no doubt inevitable that the successors of the Reformers should have interpreted Scripture in a dogmatic sense in accordance with their point of view; this was, of course, again and again fatal to scientific exegesis.

A new point of view—and this applies to the *Psalms* especially—was presented by Lowth in his *Prælectiones de Sacra Poesi Hebræorum* (1753), where he deals with the metrical forms of Hebrew poetry. In later days he was followed by other scholars, who further developed his principles; of outstanding importance here were the works of Ley, especially *Leitfaden der Metrik der Hebräischen Poesie* (1887); but the whole of this subject is dealt with in Chap. IV. Here exegesis is affected by metrical considerations; this is often illustrated in the following Commentary.

Of the highest importance for the study of the Old Testament and its exegesis was the work of Kennicott in the eighteenth century; in his *Vetus Testamentum Hebraicum cum variis lectionibus* (1776–1780) he collated, with the assistance of other scholars, over six hundred Hebrew manuscripts, together with sixteen Samaritan codices; for the textual critic, and for a resultant scientific exegesis, this work was of inestimable value, though not, of course, in itself exegetical.

Finally, we come to the labours of the scholars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which has done so much for the fuller understanding of the *Psalms*. Of these, however, we need say but a few words here, for our indebtedness to them will be found to be acknowledged again and again in the Commentary (see also the Bibliography). Archæological research during the last generation has been of immense value to Biblical students; new light has been thrown on the early religious beliefs and ritual of the Hebrews; philological studies have been greatly forwarded; historical, geographical, and ethnical knowledge

have been increased. Much of this bears on the study of the *Psalms*, and modern commentators, as a whole, have made good use of the new material offered. In addition, greater attention has been paid to the criticism of the text, especially in the light of the ancient Versions; and the metrical form in which the *Psalms* were written has received the recognition it deserves. Differences of opinion on many matters necessarily exist; but this is to be welcomed, for final decisions and ultimate truth can be reached only by the frank exchange of varying points of view.

PSALM I

This psalm is in the nature of a Preface to the Psalter. The main theme, often dealt with by other psalmists, centres in the doctrine of retribution ; and it will be recognized that this theme in a " Preface " of this kind is wholly appropriate. The psalmist sees that, broadly speaking, his people are divided into good and bad, godly men and evil-doers. As observers of the Law the former are prospered by God, while the evil perish. The psalmist knew well enough that the facts of life did not always bear this out ; but he maintains that, generally speaking, the man who was faithful to the Law was rewarded ; but that the wicked suffered for their wickedness. The psalmist presents this great division among his people without taking account of the various views urged by other psalmists (see, further, Ps. 73) ; nor does he speak of the oppression of the godly by the wicked, which is an outstanding theme in so many psalms. He says nothing on the subject of worship, or sacrifices, and of other matters of religious importance. The omission of such subjects in what is in the nature of a Preface is a matter of common sense ; we mention the point only because it is sometimes stated that the writer of this psalm is lacking in the presentation of important truths. It is true that his religious outlook does not seem to partake of the deep spirituality of so many of the psalmists ; but this is simply due to the fact that he was writing an introductory preface.

In all that he says the psalmist has only his own people in mind ; the " wicked " are those of his own race, not Gentiles.

As to date, the psalm may be assigned to the Greek period; roughly, about the middle of the third century B.C.; this is suggested by the fact that the psalmist belonged to the circle of the Sages, and by the emphasis laid on the Law; a somewhat earlier date is, of course, quite possible; but its character of "Preface" makes the later date more probable because the whole Psalter was presumably in existence (see further, pp. 70 f.) before this psalm was written.

The metre is somewhat variable, but the changes are effective in bringing out thoughts for special emphasis.

1. O the blessedness of the man
that doth not walk
in the counsel of the wicked,
And in the way of sinners doth not stand, and in the seat of scorners doth not sit.
2. But in the Law of Yahweh is his delight, and in his Law doth he meditate day and night.

3. He is like a tree
planted by ° the water,
the fruit of which
it bringeth forth in its season,
and its leaf fadeth not.
° And whatsoever he doeth it prospereth.°
4. Not so are the wicked, ° not so °, but like the chaff which the wind
driveth away are they.
5. Therefore ° they shall not hold their own, °—
the wicked,—in the judgement,
Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
6. For Yahweh knoweth
the way of the righteous;
But the way of the wicked shall perish.

Text-critical Notes

3. Om. פְּלִי, "the streams of", which disturbs the rhythm, and does not occur in Jer. 17⁸ on which this verse is based. On the last line see exeg. note. 4. Repeat, with G, לִפְנֵי, demanded by the rhythm. 5. Lit. "they shall not arise", see exeg. note.

1. The psalmist describes the avoidance of fellowship with evil-doers in three directions if a man would be blessed; the word is a noun, *blessedness*, which connotes here spiritual happiness (cp. Ps. 34⁸); but it is also used of material benefits (*e.g.*, Ps. 127⁵). The way in which this is expressed is in the style of the Wisdom-writers (cp., *e.g.*, Prov. 3^{13, 14}), and marks the psalmist as belonging to the circle of Wise-men (*Hakamim*). The three terms used of evil-doers, following their usage in the Wisdom literature, are in a rising scale: *the wicked* is a general term; *sinners* are lit. those who "miss" the right way, purposeful in wrong-doing; while *scorners* are the worst type, for they mock not only men, but God. With such the godly man will not *walk, stand, nor sit*. This negative action on the part of the godly man is followed by what is his positive conduct: *delight* in fulfilling *the Law of Yahweh*, and *meditating* therein *day and night*. This stress on the observance of the Law is another characteristic of the Wisdom writers (see, *e.g.*, Prov. 3¹⁻³ and elsewhere). 3. The comparison of the godly man with *a tree planted by the water . . .*, is clearly taken from Jer. 17⁵⁻⁸; but the prophet may well have been indebted to the Egyptian Wisdom book, "The Teaching of Amen-em-ope," where it is written:

"But the truly silent one [in contrast to the passionate man], when he standeth aside,
He is like a tree that groweth in a plot;
It groweth green, and the fruit thereof increaseth;
It standeth in the presence of its lord;
Its fruits are sweet, its shade is pleasant,
And it findeth its end in the garden."

In details the two are naturally divergent, but it is the central idea of the comparison which is significant. In our psalm we have omitted "the streams of" before *the water*, as this does not figure in the prophetic passage referred to, and interferes with the two-beat rhythm

here. It is probable, as several commentators remark, that the words *And whatsoever he doeth it prospereth* were not part of the original form of the psalm; they are prosaic, and uncalled-for after the poetical way in which the prosperity of the godly man has been described. 4, 5. In contrast to the happy lot of him who observes the Law of Yahweh, *the wicked* (spoken of in the plural), with the ruinous fate that awaits them, are held up as a warning. The emphatic repetition, *Not so are the wicked, not so*, is taken from the Septuagint; but the extra beat is required to correspond with the beats in the second half-line, so that the Septuagint evidently represents the original form of the Hebrew text. Very graphic is the picture of *the wicked being like the chaff which the wind driveth away*: when the threshers had gathered the corn on to the threshing-floor, usually situated on an elevated exposed spot, they tossed it up into the air with four- to five-pronged forks; thus the wind blew the chaff away, and the corn remained to be gathered and sifted from the straw in a sieve (cp. Am. 9⁹). This was always done late in the afternoons when the western sea-breeze blew with sufficient force to disperse the chaff, but was not so boisterous as to damage the corn. The picture portraying this familiar scene was particularly impressive because it displayed so pointedly the ineffectiveness and uselessness of the wicked. The words which follow, 5, illustrate this; but it is difficult to give a good translation of the Hebrew when seeking to reproduce the order of the words as they stand: *therefore they* (i.e., the wicked, which comes in the second member of the verse) *shall not hold their own—the wicked—in the judgement*; this is confessedly a paraphrase in order to bring out the force of the Hebrew, “they shall not arise”; for the picture is that of a court of justice, where, in turn, accuser and accused stand up to plead. In this case God is the Accuser; but the thought is not that of the final Judgement; the psalmist is dealing with present conditions, not with the world of the future, which belongs to Eschatology. Just as the wicked are silenced in the presence of the Almighty, so too shall *the sinners* not be able to assert themselves *in the assembly of the righteous*. 6. Finally, the psalmist sums up all that has gone before: *For Yahweh knoweth the way of the righteous*, i.e., Yahweh takes note of the manner of life of the righteous, and rewards them accordingly; *But the way of the wicked shall perish*, i.e., the usage or mode of action of the wicked leads to nothing. “Way” (*derek*) in Hebrew has a variety of meanings according to the context.

Religious Teaching

The central theme is the doctrine of retribution; but, as this has already been dealt with in some detail (pp. 86 ff.), we shall refer to it

only indirectly now. Apart from this, however, there are one or two other matters of deep religious interest, suggested by the psalm, to which attention may be drawn. We have, first, the teaching, implicit, not directly stated (*v.* 6), that the reward of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked are brought about by divine action. To be sure, each, reward and punishment, is the result of a man's way of life; but these, it is taught, do not follow as the necessary sequence of cause and effect; they are brought about by the act of God. Closely connected with this there is, in the next place, the teaching on human free-will which underlies all that the psalmist says; this sounds like a contradiction of what has just been said; it is not so in reality. We must distinguish between the divine will and divine grace. The psalmist fully recognizes the former; he also stresses the action of human free-will; but there is no hint of divine grace. The tendency to lay stress on the former rather than on the latter is, in general, characteristic of Judaism; not that the action of divine grace is lost sight of; that is not the case; but it is no injustice to say that it does not receive the same emphasis as that laid on human free-will. It is not to be denied that the true balance between divine grace and human free-will does sometimes find expression in Jewish authoritative writings; but it is exceptional.

One other matter: intercourse between the godly and sinners is directly discountenanced. Two thoughts strike one here: if the wicked never come into contact with the godly, what chance have they of learning better things and improving? We must suppose that the psalmist was actuated by the principle that they that touch pitch will be defiled! Perhaps that is sometimes the only way (*cp.* 1 Cor. 5¹¹); yet we cannot help thinking of our Lord's way (*Mk.* 2¹⁵⁻¹⁷).

PSALM 2

THE main difficulty in the interpretation of this psalm is to decide who the speakers are; on this there are differences of opinion. The difficulty is increased by the abrupt opening of the psalm, which reads as though some words preceding had been uttered by a speaker, and are now lost. We hope to show that the whole psalm was recited by the king; if, as some hold, it is the court-poet who speaks in the name of the king, his words come, at any rate, as from the king. The nations are represented as speaking in *v.* 3, Yahweh in *vv.* 6, part of 7, 8, 9, but these are words put into the mouths of others by the king. It was on the occasion of his enthronement that the king in question

recited the psalm. Contrary to the opinion of some commentators, the psalm, as we shall show, is thoroughly logical and consistent throughout. It is a magnificent confession of faith in God at a time when the newly anointed king, entering upon his position of great honour and responsibility, finds that his country is menaced by a confederation of external foes.

Nothing could be more natural than that the psalm should have been interpreted in a Messianic sense: "his anointed", "my king", "my son", the possessive pronoun being in each case in reference to God, as well as the king having been begotten by Yahweh, would seem to demand a Messianic interpretation. In spite of this, however, we shall give reasons to show that the psalm is not Messianic. The expressions mentioned will be seen to refer to the earthly ruler, not to the Messianic king. It is only by reading-in later ideas that a Messianic interpretation is suggested. That *v.* 7 is quoted in Acts 13³³, Hebr. 1⁵, 5⁵ as in reference to Christ cannot be urged in support, for Old Testament passages are often utilized by New Testament writers for illustrative purposes without taking their context into consideration; it is worth noting that our Lord never quotes this verse, yet there were occasions on which it would have been so appropriately quoted had he believed it to have had a Messianic sense; see, *e.g.*, Lk. 22⁷⁰, Jn. 5^{17, 18}.

As to the date of the psalm, apart from the fact that it is obviously pre-exilic, there is nothing in it which enables us to point to anything more definite. The conditions portrayed in the first two verses clearly reflect some actual historical event; but we are unable to find in the Old Testament any *data* whereby this can be identified. When, however, one considers that, dating from the beginning of the monarchy to its disappearance, a period of, roughly, four centuries is covered in the comparatively short Biblical record, many events must have happened of which we have no details. The two or three Aramaisms which occur in the psalm are no indication of date; they could have been inserted at any time. As to the contention of some commentators that the psalm is Maccabæan, we can only suggest that some little attention should be paid to Jewish history during the last two pre-Christian centuries.

The metre, with the exception of *vv.* 5, 7, 8, 12, is 3 : 3; these are, respectively, 2 : 2 : 2, 3 : 3 : 3, 2 : 2 : 3, 3 : 3 : 3.

- | | |
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| 1. Why do the nations rage, | and the peoples imagine a vain thing? |
| 2. The kings of the earth ° conspire together °, | and the princes take joint counsel |
| Against Yahweh and against his anointed : | against his anointed : |
| 3. "Let us tear their bands asunder, | and let us cast away from us their cords." |
| 4. He that abideth in the heavens laugheth, | ° Yahweh ° doth have them in derision ; |

5. then shall he speak
unto them in his wrath,
and in his fierce anger terrify them :
6. " Yea, I have set up my king on Zion my holy hill ! "
7. I will speak concerning Yahweh's decree :
8. He said unto me : " My son art thou ; this day have I begotten thee ;
Ask, and I will give
nations for thine inheritance,
And for thy possession the ends of the earth ;
9. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel ! "
10. And now, O ye kings, be wise ; be instructed, O ye judges of the earth ;
11. Serve Yahweh in fear, ° and with trembling kiss his feet °,
12. Lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way,
for his wrath may soon be kindled.
O the blessedness of all that seek refuge in him !

Text-critical Notes

2. Read יִתְעַבְּרוּ (cp. Ps. 83³) for יִתְעַבְּרוּ, "set themselves". 4. Read, with many MSS., יְהוָה for יְהוָה, "my Lord". 8. Om. מִמֶּנִּי, "from me", for the rhythm's sake. 11. Read, with Bertholet, בְּרַעְדָּהּ בְּרַעְדָּהּ for בְּשִׁקְוֵי־בֶרֶךְ "and rejoice with trembling kiss son".

1, 2. The psalm opens in a somewhat abrupt manner, and records, as will be seen from the context (v. 6), the words of a newly enthroned king. The reason for this unusual beginning is that the words express what was foremost in the mind of this king, namely, the menace of a confederation of rebellious subject-states who were taking the opportunity of the advent of a new ruler to assert their independence. The frequency of this procedure in the history of the ancient eastern kingdoms is sufficiently well known not to need further illustration. The mention of *nations* and *peoples*, *kings* and *princes*, sounds very imposing to modern Western ears ; but we are dealing with ancient Oriental modes of speech ; we find, *e.g.*, in the Tell el-Amarna tablets that even the ruler of a mere city is called a king. In the ancient East "king" (Hebr. *melek*) had not the same connotation that it has now. The reference in our psalm is to such states as Edom, Moab, Ammon, and the like. The interrogative form with which the psalm opens is, on the one hand, an expression of surprised contempt, but, on the other, an implicit expression of faith, as the context again shows. The purpose of these nations was so utterly foolish in view of the fact that the king against whom their action was directed was Yahweh's representative, that it could be referred to only by a contemptuous query : *Why do the nations rage, and the peoples imagine a vain thing?* The Hebrew word rendered "rage," which occurs here only (the noun in Ps. 64²), must, in view of the context, be understood in the sense of angry feelings, not in that of tumultuous demonstration ; for the imagining of "a vain thing", together with what is said in the next verse, points to secret machinations, which had come to the king's ears. This the king then describes more fully. The slight emendation of the Hebrew text (following Ps. 83³), whereby we read

conspire together for stand up together, is justified both because of the parallel *take counsel together*, and also because it gives the requisite sense; for standing up together and thereby revealing their purpose, is just what they would not do; the conspiracy is as yet only in preparation. It is because they are conspiring *against Yahweh and against his anointed*, that their purpose is so utterly foolish. In those days, when each people had their own national deity, to attack the nation was to defy the god. In this case, these peoples had been subdued by Yahweh, who had thereby shown his power; what folly, therefore, to contemplate fighting against him and his anointed king. The implicit faith in God which the king here exhibits will be noted. 3. He then puts into the mouth of the kings and princes the words which he assumes them to be uttering: *Let us tear their bands asunder, and let us cast away from us their cords*; i.e., they intend to throw off their state of vassalage under Judah.

It will be noted, in passing, how impossible, in view of what has been said, a Messianic interpretation of the psalm is. The nations spoken of have hitherto been subject to Yahweh and to his anointed king, thereby acknowledging him as their ruler; but never in Messianic teaching does such a *trait* occur; the nations of the world are the enemies of the Messiah, and never anything else until the Messianic kingdom is set up. But that by the way. 4. The threat of the nations calls forth, first, the mockery of Yahweh: *He that abideth in the heavens laugheth*; to our ears it sounds irreverent, but anthropomorphic expressions of this kind are inevitable where there is still an undeveloped conception of God. But this is followed by his wrath. 5, 6. The cause of Yahweh's wrath is that in spite of the fact that it is *he* who established the king on the throne, yet it is against *Yahweh's* representative that the nations conspire: *Yea, I* (emphatically expressed in the Hebrew) *have set up my king on Zion my holy hill*. These words the king puts into the mouth of Yahweh; 7. then, addressing the assembled courtiers again, he says: *I will speak concerning Yahweh's decree*; he claims to have received a divine oracle. However we may conceive of the way in which such divine utterances were communicated, there is no sort of doubt that it was believed that to kings they were vouchsafed (cp. 1 Sam. 11⁶, to Saul; 2 Sam. 23^{2, 3}, to David; 1 Kgs. 3⁵, 9²⁴, to Solomon, and elsewhere). 8, 9. The words of the decree then follow, the king asserting that they had been spoken to him: *He said unto me*. That the words which follow were Messianically interpreted by the early Church is an illustration of the way in which later thought read a meaning into passages which originally they did not have (cp., e.g., Isa. 7¹⁴ in Matth. 1¹⁸⁻²³, Gal. 4²⁷, Hebr. 1⁸⁴, and elsewhere). *My son art thou*; in the ancient East the belief in the divine origin of the king was widespread.

Numerous illustrations could be given, did space permit; but it is more to the purpose to show that a similar belief was held by the people of Israel. Nothing could be more pointed than the words put into the mouth of Yahweh by the prophet Nathan; they are spoken to David in reference to Solomon: "I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever; I will be his father, and he shall be my son." Similarly, in reference to David it is said in Ps. 89^{26, 27}: "He shall call me, 'My father art thou . . .', yea, I have made him my firstborn, most high among kings of the earth." In its origin the divine sonship of the king was conceived of in a literal sense; but this was utterly alien to Hebrew thought, where the idea is purely that of adoption; on the enthronement of the king Yahweh adopted him as his son. This is fully brought out by the words which follow in the psalm: *this day have I begotten thee*; "this day" is the day of the king's enthronement. He is to have *nations* for his *inheritance*, and *the ends of the earth* for his *possession*; this is in the Oriental poetical style, similarly as in Ps. 72⁸. The destruction of the peoples, 9, is again not intended literally, as the words which follow show. Here the king speaks again in his own name, 10-12: *And now, O ye kings, be wise; be instructed, O ye judges of the earth*; these words express, of course, the royal wish, for obviously they could not have been addressed directly to the kings and judges who were busy conspiring together. By the words *Serve Yahweh in fear*, are meant, "Be subject to me," i.e., Yahweh's representative. The text of the second half of this verse is confessedly difficult; as it stands, the Hebrew text reads: "And rejoice with trembling. Kiss the son, lest he be angry . . ."; read in connexion with their context, and without preconceived notions, it must be granted that the words raise doubts as to their genuineness. To begin with; the metre requires three beats in each half of the verse, thus:

"Serve Yahweh in fear, and rejoice with trembling, kiss-son";

"kiss-son" is joined together as one word in the Hebrew. Then it must be noted that "rejoice with trembling" is an impossible combination according to Hebrew usage; one has but to look up the passages in which these two words, respectively, occur to see the truth of this. Again, as the text stands, there is no parallelism, which is so characteristic of the rest of the psalm. And finally, the use of the Aramaic word for "son" (*bar*), after the Hebrew, *ben*, has been used previously (v. 7), is unprecedented. It is evident that the Versions did not all have before them the text as it now stands; the Septuagint and the Vulgate have, instead of "kiss the son," the rendering, "take hold of correction"; similarly the Targum. Jerome had the present text before him, but translated it *adore pure*, taking *bar* in an adverbial sense from the root *barar* "to purify". It will thus be seen

that there is every justification for emending the text; we are indebted to Bertholet¹ for the rendering: "and with trembling kiss his feet", which involves but little alteration of the text. The phrase "to kiss the feet" means to acknowledge subjugation, cp. Isa. 49²², Ps. 72⁹, Mic. 7¹⁷, and occurs in Egyptian and Babylonian documents. In the final verse of our psalm, *Lest he be angry . . .*, refers therefore as we should expect, to Yahweh. The final words, *O the blessedness of all that seek refuge in him*, held by some commentators to be a later addition, make an extremely appropriate conclusion to the psalm, since they are uttered in reference both to the king and to the nations who have been adjured to "be wise".

Religious Teaching

The conception of God portrayed in this psalm does not reach the same high level as that of so many other psalms. There are some old-world ideas expressed which betray a somewhat undeveloped apprehension of the Divine Personality. Anthropomorphisms do not, it is true, necessarily denote primitive conceptions, as they may be, and often are, in the Old Testament, figurative expressions; but in this psalm the references to the Almighty are somewhat crude. At the same time, it must be recognized that belief in God, and trust in his power, appear prominently. Moreover, the thought of God adopting the king as his son, so different in conception from the similar belief among other nations of antiquity, witnesses at any rate to a far higher religious stage among the Hebrews.

PSALM 3

THIS beautiful little psalm tells of one who is in grave danger from the malice of enemies; the cause of their animosity is not indicated; but from their mocking words: "No help for thee in thy God!" we may gather that religious differences were largely in question. This is substantiated by the psalmist's superb faith in God, through whose protection he feels perfectly safe from his enemies, who are also the enemies of God.

In the title the psalm is attributed to David, and is brought into connexion with the narrative contained in 2 Sam. 15; but this cannot be taken seriously; when one reads this narrative the conviction is forced upon one that various *traits* would necessarily have been reflected

¹ ZAW, for 1908, pp. 58, 59, 193.

in the psalm had there been any connexion between the two. There is not sufficient reason to deny a pre-exilic date to the psalm, but anything more precise cannot be postulated, as indications in the psalm itself are wanting.

The metre is mainly 3 : 3, but in *vv.* 3, 7, 8, we have, respectively, 2 : 2 : 3, 2 : 2 : 3 : 3, and 2 : 2.

1. *A Psalm. David's ; when he fled from the face of Absalom his son.*

- 1 (2). Yahweh, how many are mine
adversaries,
2 (3). Many are they which say to my soul : " No help ° for thee ° ° in thy God ° | " Selah.
3 (4). But thou, Yahweh,
art a shield about me,
My glory, and the lifter-up of my head.
4 (5). With my voice unto Yahweh do I cry, and he answereth me from his holy hill. Selah.
5 (6). I laid me down and slept, I awoke, for Yahweh sustaineth me.
6 (7). I have no fear of ten thousands of people that set themselves against me round about.
7 (8). Arise, Yahweh,
save me, my God ;
For thou dost smite all mine enemies
on the cheek-bone, thou dost break the teeth of the wicked.
8 (9). To Yahweh belongeth help,
upon thy people be thy blessing. Selah.

Text-critical Notes

2. Read, with S, $\text{לֵּי} \text{לֵּי}$ for לֵּי "for him". Read, with S, בְּיָהוָה for בְּיָהוָה "in God".

1, 2. The psalmist gives no indication as to the cause of the perilous position in which he finds himself; but as to a friend he pours out his heart to *Yahweh*, telling him of the many *adversaries* who *rise up against* him, and of their wicked words: *No help for thee in thy God, which they say to his soul*, a Hebrew way of expressing the individual self. 3, 4. But he sees how foolish is the threat of his enemies, for he knows him in whom he trusts: *But thou, Yahweh, art a shield about me*, so that the missiles cast at him, whether literal, or slanderous words, fall harmless to the ground; for he knows that *Yahweh* is his *glory*, or "honour," and the *lifter-up of his head*. 4. This implicit faith is unshakeable, for his happy experience is that whenever he lifts up his *voice* and cries unto *Yahweh*, *he answereth me from his holy hill*. By the "holy hill" is meant Zion (cp. Ps. 2⁶). 5, 6. His sublime faith in the ever-watchful care of *Yahweh* over him night and day he expresses further in words, the simple beauty of which is very inspiring: *I laid me down and slept*, implying a conviction of the loving presence during the hours of darkness; *I awoke, for Yahweh sustaineth me*; his first thought on awakening is of *Yahweh*. That inspires him with fearless courage, come what may: *I have no fear of ten thousands of people that set themselves against me round about*.

7, 8. The note of triumphant faith peals out in the final words: *Arise, Yahweh, save me, my God*, is an exclamation denoting the psalmist's affirmation of trust, rather than in the nature of an appeal; this is evident from the statement of Yahweh's action in the words which follow; the *smiting on the cheek-bone* is not elsewhere imputed to Yahweh (cp. 1 Kgs. 22²⁴, Job 16¹⁰), but for the thought of Yahweh *breaking the teeth of the wicked*, cp. Ps. 58⁶; distasteful as such anthropomorphic expressions sound to our ears, it must be remembered that when uttered by spiritually-minded men like our psalmist, they are used figuratively. In the closing words the psalmist identifies himself with his people, attributing *help to Yahweh*, and calling for his *blessing upon his people*. It is unnecessary to regard these words, as some commentators do, as a later liturgical addition.

Religious Teaching

This has been brought out in the exegetical notes. It needs but to be added that for the expression of sublime trust in God this psalm is not surpassed in the Psalter.

PSALM 4

THE variety of ways in which this psalm is explained by commentators witnesses to the difficulty of interpreting it. This difficulty arises largely owing to the fact that references to persons and events occur without any clear indication as to who the persons are, and what events are in question. The interpretation which we have to offer differs in some particulars from those of other commentators; it may, or may not, be the right one; but we venture to hope that it will be found to explain the various obscurities. For its justification we must refer to the exegetical notes. But our interpretation is, briefly, as follows: Owing to the failure of the harvest, the people, or a large section of them, are disheartened and discontented; they not only blame Yahweh for this, but even turn, in consequence, to the worship of another god. The psalmist, firm in his trust in God, in spite of all, is mocked for his belief and faithfulness. He reproves the people for their unstable belief, testifying from his own experience that God always helps in time of need. His prayer on behalf of the wavering people, implied in the opening words of the psalm, is seen to be answered by what he says in the concluding verse.

There is no sufficient reason for doubting that the psalm belongs

to pre-exilic times; but it is not possible to assign a more exact date, as indications are wanting.

The second half of *v. 1* has three beats to each half-line; in the rest of the psalm we have indicated the metre as 2 : 2 : 2 : 2, which may, however, also be denoted as 4 : 4.

1. *For the Precentor : With stringed instruments. A Psalm. David's.*

- 1 (2). When I cry, answer me,
O God of my righteousness;
When I was in trouble thou didst set me at large; be gracious unto me, and hear my prayer.
- 2 (3). O ye sons of men, how long
shall my glory be for dishonour?
Ye love vanity,
Ye seek falsehood. Selah.
- 3 (4). But know that Yahweh
did wondrously show his mercy to me °;
Yahweh ° doth hear me °
when I call unto him.
- 4 (5). Be perturbed, but sin not;
Commune with your heart
on your couch, and be silent. Selah.
- 5 (6). Bring righteous offerings,
and trust in Yahweh.
- 6 (7). Many say :
"Who showeth us good ?
° Departed from us
is the light of his countenance ! " °
- 7 (8). ° Yahweh ° hath given
joy in my heart,
° greater than ° when their corn
and their wine were abundant.
- 8 (9). Altogether in peace
will I lie down and sleep;
For thou, Yahweh, °
makest me to dwell in safety.

Text-critical Notes

3. Read יְהוָה חֲסִדוֹ לִי יִרְעֵי בִי-הַפְלֵא for the present Hebr. text: "But know that Yahweh hath set apart a godly one to him". Read, with G, יִשְׁמְעֵנִי for יִשְׁמַע "he heareth". 6. Read, with Gunkel:
כֹּס בְּעֵלְיָנוּ אִחֵר כָּפָנוּ :

8. Add יְהוָה from the previous verse. Lit. "more than at the time". 8. Om. לְבַדּ "alone", for the rhythm's sake.

1. At a time of distress the psalmist appeals to Yahweh, addressing him as *God of my righteousness*, by which is meant that whatever righteousness there is in the heart of the psalmist is from God. His present appeal is prompted by the experience of divine mercy in the past: *When I was in trouble thou didst set me at large*; the force of these words is difficult to bring out adequately in translation; the root-idea of "in trouble" is that of restriction, or of being hemmed in, so that there is much significance in this being followed by "thou didst set me at large". The psalmist, then, recalls this act of divine mercy in the past, and in the strength of it now pleads, *be gracious unto me, and hear my prayer*. What is the purport of his prayer?

That is just where, at first sight, this psalm is so puzzling. Instead of saying what he is praying for, thereby continuing to address his words to God, which is what would naturally be expected, the psalmist suddenly puts a question to the more influential class of men, as the expression *bené 'is* implies, saying: *O ye sons of men, how long shall my glory be for dishonour?* The point here is that these men had scoffed at his trust in Yahweh in which he had gloried; hence they had turned his glory to shame, from their point of view. They, on the other hand, had forsaken the worship of Yahweh, and had been guilty of idolatry: *Ye love vanity*, lit. "emptiness," *ye seek falsehood (kazab)*, a word used in reference to false worship in Am. 2⁴, Hos. 7¹³, 11¹² (12¹), cp. Isa. 44²⁰, Ps. 40⁴. 3. In contrast to this, the psalmist bids them take knowledge that *Yahweh* had shown *his mercy* to him in wondrous wise, in reference to what he had said in v. 1, and that *Yahweh doth hear me when I call unto him*, implying that he will do the same for them. He grants that they have reason to be worried—he explains why later: 4. *Be perturbed*, but that is no excuse for their sin of turning from Yahweh; let them think out the matter for themselves, *Commune with your heart on your couch, and be silent, i.e.,* from calling upon some other god; let them be faithful in their duty to Yahweh: 5. *Bring righteous offerings, and trust in Yahweh.* 6. Then he quotes their words, describing their lack of faith in Yahweh: *Who showeth us good? Departed from us is the light of his countenance*; they think that they have been forsaken by Yahweh. 7. Then, at long last, the psalmist reveals what is the *raison d'être* of the whole psalm; through his faith *Yahweh hath given joy in my heart*, which is greater than all the satisfaction they had enjoyed at former harvests, *when their corn and their wine were abundant*; here we have the explanation of all that has gone before: there has been a bad harvest, in consequence of which the people had lost their faith in Yahweh, and had looked to some other god, no doubt Baal, for help; we are reminded of the words of the prophet: "But she did not know that it was I that gave her the corn, and the wine, and the oil, and gave her much silver and gold which she made (into an image of) Baal" (Hos. 2⁸). The psalmist, by his magnificent faith in God, even when times were distressful, sets an example to his people; and his final words of peaceful repose suggest that his example was not in vain. It is, we hope, not fanciful to see in these closing words the answer to the prayer uttered at the opening of the psalm: *When I cry, answer me, O God of my righteousness.*

Religious Teaching

Apart from the earnest faith in God in time of distress which is characteristic of all the psalmists, there is one element in this psalm

which rarely, if ever, finds expression elsewhere in the Psalter. Written at a time when there was famine, or at any rate shortage of food, in the land owing to a bad harvest, the psalmist glories in the spiritual satisfaction of joy within him through his love and faithfulness to God; compared with this, material wants do not trouble him. He recognizes, of course, that men need food and drink; but he knows that the Giver of all good gifts will supply all that is needful: "Thou, Yahweh, makest me to dwell in safety." With him it is first things first; it is the victory of the spiritual over the material. We are reminded of the gracious words: "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things; but seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matth. 6^{32, 33}).

PSALM 5

WE have here the prayer of a faithful servant of Yahweh, uttered during the offering of the morning sacrifice; the ceremonial for this is described in Exod. 29^{39, 40}, Lev. 6¹²⁻¹⁸ (in the Hebrew 6⁵⁻¹¹), Num. 28⁴⁻⁷. The psalmist is menaced by many enemies, but he nowhere gives any indication of the cause of their enmity; they are evidently men of his own race, for, had they been Gentiles, the fact would have been brought out. On the whole subject of the frequent mention of the enemies of the psalmists, see above, Chap. VIII.

One cannot but recognize that the psalmist's prayer suffers interruptions because his mind is so full of the thoughts of his enemies; this occasions a certain incongruity; but the simple-hearted way in which the alternations are uttered is an interesting illustration of the unrestrained outpouring of one who has experienced the love of God in full measure, and feels that he can unburden his heart as to a friend. The psalm is difficult to date, but the type of the enemies suggests that it is post-exilic.

The metre is 3 : 2 throughout.

1. *For the Precentor : To the Nehiloth. A Psalm. David's.*

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | (2). Give heed to my words, Yahweh, | consider my musing; |
| 2 | (3). Hearken unto the sound of my
cry, | my King, and my God; |
| | For to thee do I pray ° at morn, | 3 (4). mayest thou hear my voice; |
| | At morn I make ready for thee, | and watch ° for thee.° |
| 4 | (5). For thou delightest ° not in wicked-
ness, | |
| 5 | (6). The arrogant stand not up | an evil man sojourneth not with thee ;
before thine eyes ; |

- Thou hatest all workers of iniquity,
The man of blood and deceit
7 (8). As for me, because of the greatness of thy love,
I worship in thy holy temple
8 (9). Yahweh, lead me in thy righteousness;
Make straight before me thy way.
9 (10). For there is no understanding ° in their mouth °,
An open sepulchre is their throat,
10 (11). Hold thou them guilty, O God,
Because of the multitude of their transgressions repel them,
11 (12). But let them that trust in thee rejoice,
° And let them continually exult in thee,
12 (13). For thou dost bless the righteous man,
And dost cover him as with a shield,
- 6 (7). ° all ° them that speak lies;
° thou dost abhor, ° Yahweh.
I enter thy house,
in the fear of thee.
because of mine adversaries,
their inward part is destruction,
they make smooth their tongue.
may they fall through their own plannings,
for they have rebelled against thee.
let them ever shout for joy,
all that love thy name.
Yahweh, with peace,
dost crown him with favour. °

Text-critical Notes

2. Om. יהוה and place the stop after בָּקֵר, for the rhythm's sake. 3. Add אֱלֹהִי for the rhythm's sake. 4. Om., with many MSS., אֵל, "God". 6. Om. תִּתְאֲבֹד for the rhythm's sake; insert קֵל with G. Read תִּתְאֲבֹד for תִּתְאֲבֹד, "he abhorreth". 9. Read, with the Versions, בְּפִימוֹ for בְּפִיחִי, "in his mouth". 11, 12. The text is here clearly out of order, and there is no metrical arrangement as it stands; read, with several commentators:

כָּל-אֲחֵבֵי שֹׁמֵד;	וַיַּעֲלֶצֶ בְּהַ תְּמִיד
יְחִיָּה בְּשָׁלוֹם	פִּי-אֲמַתְּ הַבְּרָה צְדִיק
רָצוֹן תַּעֲמִרְנִי;	וְהִסֵּךְ עָלָיו כְּצִנָּה

On the difficult and uncertain meaning of the expression "To the Nehiloth" in the title, see pp. 11 ff.

1-3. The prayer which the psalmist addresses to Yahweh is described in a threefold manner: *Give heed to my words*, in reference to the content of the prayer: *consider my musing*, referring to the thoughts which have prompted the words, cp. Ps. 39³, at first mentally expressed; the prayer is then uttered aloud: *Hearken unto the sound of my cry*. For the address to Yahweh as *my King and my God*, cp. Ps. 44⁴, 68²⁴, 74¹², 84³. The prayer is offered *at morn*, cp. Ps. 88¹³, and that it was uttered during the offering of the daily morning sacrifice is made clear by the expression *I make ready*; this is a technical sacrificial term, meaning lit. "to set in order", in reference to the wood for the fire to burn the sacrifice (cp. Gen. 22⁹, 1 Kgs. 18³³, the term is also used in Lev. 1⁸, 12, 61² [6⁵ in Hebrew]); its use here suggests that the psalmist was a priest, for the term is used in connexion with priestly functions. The sacrifice, during which the prayer was said, would naturally be thought to make the prayer more efficacious, for sacrifice was in the nature of inviting the divine presence; hence the psalmist's words that he *watches for* Yahweh (cp.

Isa. 21⁶, Mic. 7⁷). 4-6. The prayer is interrupted here, for the psalmist's mind is so full of the thoughts of his enemies—because of whose menacing attitude he utters his prayer—that he breaks off in order to open his heart to God about them. That these enemies are men of his own race is shown by the way in which the psalmist repudiates the idea of their coming to worship, a thing which would not be contemplated in the case of Gentiles: *the arrogant stand not up before thine eyes, i.e.*, do not present themselves in the presence of God (cp. Josh. 24¹, 1 Sam. 10¹⁹, Zech. 6⁶). The type of these enemies is of the worst kind; they are *arrogant, workers of iniquity*, they *speak lies*, are *men of blood*, and full of *deceit*, all terms occurring in other psalms in describing other psalmists' enemies of a similar type. Such *Yahweh* doth *abhor*. 7. In contrast to these the psalmist says of himself that owing to *the greatness of God's love (hesed)* for him, he is enabled to *enter his house*, and, in *holy fear of him*, to *worship in his holy temple*. 8-10. The psalmist then takes up his prayer again: *Yahweh, lead me in thy righteousness*, lest his *adversaries* should tempt him into wrong ways; and he adds: *Make straight before me thy way*, in order that he may see clearly how he ought to walk. But the thought of his adversaries again predominates, and the bitter things said about them can be justified only because they are reckoned as God's enemies: *they have rebelled against thee*. 11, 12. More edifying is the final part of the prayer; the text in these verses has suffered in transcription, for the order of the clauses is not quite logical, and the metre, which is regular in the rest of the psalm, disappears here. For the rendering given above we are largely indebted to several commentators; it will be seen that it reads smoothly, and the metre conforms to that of the rest of the psalm. The passage is the most beautiful part of the psalm. The psalmist prays both for himself and for those like-minded with him, that they who *trust* in God may *rejoice*; and closes with an affirmation of faith: God does *bless the righteous man with peace*, and *cover him as with a shield*, the word used is that of the large shield which covers the whole body, and *crown him with favour* (cp. Ps. 103⁴).

Religious Teaching

This has been sufficiently dealt with in the exegetical notes.

PSALM 6

THE psalm presents us with a picture, one of the most vivid of its kind in the Psalter, of a sufferer prostrate on his bed of sickness. So

severe is the nature of his malady that a fatal outcome is contemplated. That the psalmist conceives his suffering to be inflicted because of sin is evident from his mention of the divine wrath. Towards the end of the psalm reference is made to the sufferer's adversaries; but, as in so many other psalms of a like nature, it is not said who they are or why they are envenomed against him. The sudden change from plaintive grief to the triumphant denunciation of his enemies, together with the declaration that God has heard his prayer, suggests that the last three verses may have been added a little later, but by the same writer.

As to the date, the pronounced sense of sin points to the post-exilic period; but a more exact indication of date is not possible.

The metre is 3 : 3, with the exception of vv. 2, 4, 8; in the first half of each of these it is 2 : 2, the second half having again three beats.

1. *For the Precentor : With stringed instruments. On the eighth. A Psalm. David's.*
- 1 (2). Yahweh, rebuke me not in thine anger, and in thine indignation chasten me not.
- 2 (3). Have mercy on me, Yahweh,
for I am withered away,
Heal me, ° for my bones ° are dried up. °
- 3 (4). My soul is greatly terrified, but thou, Yahweh, how long ?
- 4 (5). Turn thee, Yahweh,
deliver my soul,
Save me for thy lovingkindness' sake.
- 5 (6). For in death there is no remembrance of thee, in Sheol who will give thanks unto thee ?
- 6 (7). I am weary with my sighing ; °
- 7 (8). Mine eye wasteth away for grief, I flood my couch every night, with my tears I deluge my resting-place.
groweth weak ° because of all ° my
distress °.
- 8 (9). Depart from me,
all ye workers of iniquity,
For Yahweh hath heard the sound of my weeping ;
- 9 (10). Yahweh hath heard my supplication, Yahweh hath accepted my prayer.
- 10 (11). Let all mine enemies ° be greatly terrified, let them turn away and be put to shame suddenly.

Text-critical Notes

2. Om., with G, יְהוָה for the rhythm's sake. Read, with Perles (*Analekten* ii. 51 f.), נִבְּלִי for נִבְּלִי, "are terrified". 6. Some part of the text seems to have fallen out here. 7. Read, with S, בְּכָל־ for בְּכָל־, "in all". Read, for the better parallelism, צַדִּיקִי for צַדִּיקִי, "mine adversaries". 10. Om. יְבִשְׁוִי for the rhythm's sake; the word occurs in the next half-line.

For the meaning of the expressions used in the title, see above, pp. 11, 12.

1. The psalmist's pleading that God's *anger* may not crush him is an implicit confession of sin, cp. Ps. 38¹. 2. He cries for *mercy*, for the sickness from which he is suffering has left his body in an emaciated state; in somewhat exaggerated language he cries, *I am withered away*, and speaks of his bones as being *dried up*; for this latter expression cp. Ezek. 37¹¹; it is an emendation of the Hebrew "terrified", which can hardly be used in reference to bones, and the

word occurs immediately after, 3. *My soul is greatly terrified*. The pitiful mental condition of the sufferer is poignantly expressed in the unfinished exclamation, *how long?* It can refer either to Yahweh's anger—how long will it last?—or to the sufferer's sickness; probably both are included. That his sickness is a punishment for sin is not definitely stated, but it is implied in the petition, 4. *Turn thee—i.e., from thy wrath—Yahweh, and in the appeal: Save me for thy loving-kindness' sake*. 5. His sickness has brought him near to death, and here we get one of the most pointed illustrations in the Psalter of an undeveloped belief in the Hereafter: *For in death there is no remembrance of thee, in Sheol who will give thanks unto thee?* Cp. Ps. 30⁹, 88¹⁰⁻¹², 115¹⁷ (see further pp. 88 ff.). 6. In what follows: *I am weary with my sighing*, something seems to have fallen out of the text, cp. Ps. 69³. The tendency to exaggeration, already noted, comes out again in what the psalmist says about the abundant outpouring of his tears, and 7. of the consequent effect on his eyes; but such modes of expression come naturally to the Oriental. 8-10. The very sudden change of subject in the concluding verses reads strangely, for they deal with *the workers of iniquity*, who are bidden to depart from the presence of the sufferer, the reason given being that *Yahweh hath heard the sound of my weeping . . .* It may, of course, be inferred that the thought of these sinners, *all mine enemies*, was at the back of the psalmist's mind in his utterances in the earlier part of the psalm. This is possible, but his entire silence on the subject hitherto does not support this; it seems more likely that these concluding verses (8-10) were added by the psalmist to his psalm at a subsequent period, when, having recovered from his sickness, through the mercy of Yahweh, he could stand forth as his forgiven servant, and denounce all those who were unfaithful to the God of their fathers.

Religious Teaching

Of high importance in this psalm is the teaching on the doctrine of sin. The sense of sin, though not explicitly enunciated, is very evidently implied; there is, first, *the recognition of sinfulness*, for sin calls forth the divine anger; then there is the truly *penitential spirit* which throws itself upon the mercy of God, and weeps in sorrow for sin; and, finally, *the assurance of forgiveness*, expressed by trust in God's lovingkindness. It is the first of the seven penitential psalms of the Church.

Of a negative character is the teaching concerning the After-life. The Sheol doctrine is the normal belief in the psalms, with but few exceptions. On the whole subject, see pp. 88 ff.

PSALM 7

THIS psalm must be described as one of the less inspiring in the Psalter. It gives a vivid picture of the hatred engendered by religious strife, a hatred which is mutual. The self-righteousness of the psalmist is very different from the humble-mindedness so characteristic of most of the psalm-writers. The sudden introduction of the eschatological scene in vv. 6-10 comes in strangely, and may possibly not be part of the original psalm. Much use is made of earlier psalms, which may in part account for the irregularity of the metre. The text has suffered in some verses, though it would appear that here and there unnecessary emendations are made by some commentators.

The date is probably that of the Greek period.

1. *Siggaion. David's, which he sang to Yahweh because of the words of Kush the Benjamite.*

- 1 (2). Yahweh, my God,
in thee do I trust;
save me ° from my persecutor °, and deliver me,
2 (3). Lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending, and none delivereth.
3 (4). Yahweh, my God,
if I have done this,
if there be iniquity in my hands,
4 (5). If I had requited evil to him that —but I delivered him that was without
was at peace with me, cause mine adversary—
5 (6). Then let the enemy persecute my ° and let him tread down my life to the
soul, ground,
and lay my glory in the dust. Selah.
6 (7). Arise, Yahweh, in thy wrath, lift up thyself against the rage of mine
adversaries,
awake, my God, for judgement °;
7 (8). And let the assembly of ° the and over it ° be thou seated ° in the
gods ° encompass thee, height.
8 (9). Yahweh judgeth the peoples; judge me, Yahweh, according to my
righteousness,
and according to mine integrity ° reward me °.
9 (10). May the ° wickedness ° of the ° and may righteousness be established, °
wicked ° come to an end °,
For he that trieth the hearts and
reins
10 (11). My shield is with God, is a righteous God.
11 (12). God judgeth the righteous, who saveth the upright of heart.
yea, a God that hath indignation every
day;
12 (13). If he turn not, he will whet his he hath bent his bow, and made it
sword, ready;
13 (14). For him hath he prepared the he maketh his arrows fiery shafts.
instruments of death,
14 (15). Behold !
He travaileth with iniquity,
he conceiveth mischief,
he bringeth forth falsehood.
15 (16). He dug a pit, and burrowed it out, and is fallen into the hole he made.
16 (17). His mischief shall return upon and upon his crown shall his violence
his own head, descend.
17 (18). I will give thanks to Yahweh and I will sing praise to the name of
according to his righteousness, Yahweh Most High.

Text-critical Notes

1. Read מְרִדֵּפִי, in view of the context, for מְפַלֵּלֵדֵפִי, "from all my persecutors". 5. The Hebrew adds וַיִּשָּׁג, "and let him overtake", in reference to "my soul"; we have tentatively omitted it because it overloads the half-line. 6. Orm. צִוִּיתְךָ, "thou hast commanded", for the rhythm's sake. 7. Read (cp. context) אֲלֻהִים (Ps. 82¹) for לְאֻמִּים, "peoples". Read, with several commentators, שׁוּבָה for שׁוֹבָה, "return". 8. Read, with Kittel, עָלַי for עָלֵי, "upon me". 9. Read רָע for רָע, "wicked". Read יִנָּמֵר for יִנָּמֵר. Read, with Jerome (*et confirmetur justitia*), יִתְכַּוֵּן צַדִּיק (Gunkel), for יִתְכַּוֵּן צַדִּיק, "and mayest thou establish the righteous man".

For the title see pp. 12 ff.

1, 2. The psalmist prays for deliverance from his persecutor; the context shows that we must read the singular here; his savage fierceness is compared with that of a lion; *my soul* is, as often elsewhere, used of the individual self. 3-5. A protestation of innocence follows: *if I have done this*, i.e., the evil which is then described, the psalmist is ready to suffer at the hands of his persecutor. 6. He therefore calls upon God to *arise* in his *wrath* for the *judgement* of his *adversaries*; here the plural is used, showing that his particular adversary is one of many. In praying that *Yahweh* will *arise for judgement*, the thought of the psalmist is directed to the final Judgement, which is developed in 6-10, where the Almighty is pictured as seated on his throne above, and surrounded by the host of heaven; before that tribunal *Yahweh judgeth the peoples*; then *may wickedness come to end*, and *righteousness be established*. That the psalmist should here speak of the peoples, on the one hand, and of himself individually, on the other, certainly reads strangely; it is difficult to believe that the text is in order; indeed, it may well be, as a number of commentators contend, that vv. 6-10 belonged originally to another psalm. 11 ff. follow logically after v. 5; *God judgeth the righteous*, the psalmist is referring to himself and to those like-minded with him; opposed to him is his enemy, and here again a particular individual is referred to; against him *God hath indignation every day*; in what follows, 12, 13, we have an illustration of the way in which a psalmist, in the bitterness of wrath against his enemy, becomes guilty of imputing to Yahweh action which is wholly human, and therefore altogether unseemly. No doubt the words are figuratively intended; but they are, none the less, distasteful. It is in reference to the wicked man that it is said: *If he turn not, he*—i.e., Yahweh—*will whet his sword*, as though Yahweh were a human warrior; *he hath bent his bow and made it ready*, just in the way that men prepare to meet their enemies. Sword and bow are *the instruments of death*, especially as in this case the *arrows are fiery shafts*, elsewhere equivalent to lightning (Ps. 18¹⁴), which strike a man dead on the spot. This fate of the wicked man the psalmist

feels justified in envisaging because of the innate wickedness of the former. He then goes on, 14, to describe the origin and full development of the ungodly man's wickedness; it must be confessed that the comparison here with a woman in childbirth is extremely distasteful; allowance must, however, be made for the Oriental's want of delicacy, according to Western standards. Figurative language of a harmless character is used by the psalmist when he says of the wicked man, 15, that *He dug a pit, and burrowed it out*, just as a hunter does in order to entrap his prey; this is in reference to libellous accusations, the untruth of which recoils upon the head of the false accuser: *His mischief shall return upon his own head, and upon his crown shall his violence descend*. Retribution having thus fallen upon the psalmist's enemy, thanksgiving and praise are offered to Yahweh: *I will give thanks to Yahweh . . . and will sing praise to the name of Yahweh Most High*. From these concluding words we may gather that the psalmist's rectitude in the sight of God was vindicated.

The subject-matter of the psalm does not offer material for a section on religious teaching.

PSALM 8

THIS psalm, one of the most inspiring in the whole of the Psalter, was written by one who was both a poet, a devout servant of God, and a believer in man whether as a child or as the lord over created things.

All too short as this beautiful little psalm is, it contains teaching and subject-matter for thought which are truly great. Brief reference is made to these below, but in a commentary it is hardly possible to do justice to the fulness of its content, as this would require more space than can here be devoted to it. Of the pre-exilic date of this psalm we are convinced, in spite of the arguments of some commentators.

The metre is very interesting; it is indicated in the translation; the short lines have two beats, the rest either 3 or 3 : 3.

1. *For the Precentor : On the Gittith. A Psalm. David's.*
- 1 (2). Yahweh, our Lord,
 how excellent is thy name
 in all the earth !
 ° Thou hast set ° thy glory above the heavens.
- 2 (3). From the mouth of children °
 dost thou establish strength,
 because of thine adversaries,
 To still the enemy ° and the rebellious. °
- 3 (4). When I behold thy heavens,
 the work of thy fingers,
 The moon and the stars which thou hast prepared,—

- 4 (5). What is man that thou shouldest think of him, or the son of man, that thou shouldest give heed to him?
 5 (6). Thou madest him a little lower than gods, and dost crown him with glory and honour;
 6 (7). Thou makest him to have dominion over the works of thine hands, all things thou hast put under his feet,
 7 (8). Sheep and oxen, all of them, and also the beasts of the field,
 8 (9). Birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea,
 All that passeth through the paths of ° the waters °.
 9 (10). Yahweh, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth.

Text-critical Notes

1. Read נָתַתָּה for תָּתַתָּה, "set". 2. Om. וְיִנְקָלִים, "and sucklings" (=עִוְלָלִים), which overloads the half-line. Read, with Duhm, וְיִמְחֶקֶתָם for וְיִמְחֶקֶתָם, "and the avenger", cp. Ps. 17¹. 8. Read, with Jerome, יָם for יָם, "seas".

1, 2. In simple, but beautiful, words the psalmist raises his voice in praise to *Yahweh, our Lord* ('Adon), whose *name is excellent in all the earth*; very pointed is "*our Lord*"; the psalmist stands there in solitude, but unites with himself his people. The name is identified with Yahweh, as in Ps. 148¹³; his work of creation is seen in *all the earth*, and men see the excellence of the work of the Creator though they cannot apprehend the Creator himself. Not merely the earth, but *the heavens* are of Yahweh's creation, and *above* them his *glory* abides (cp. Ps. 113⁴). Even *children* witness to the glory of Yahweh, thereby silencing his *enemies* and those who are *rebellious* against him; in that sense the children exhibit divinely-given strength; the Hebrew text is, however, somewhat uncertain. 3-8. It is at eventide that the psalmist gazes up at the illimitable expanse of the heavens with the mysterious glory of the moon, and studded with stars; and an overpowering sense of the greatness and might of God takes hold of him. With holy self-contempt at the thought of the insignificance of humanity in the sight of God, he cries: *What is man that thou shouldest think of him . . . ?* And yet—and here the psalmist is implicitly uttering praise and thanksgiving to God—it had seemed good to the Almighty to create man in wondrous fashion: *Thou madest him a little lower than gods* (cp. Gen. 1²⁷), thereby *crowning him with glory and honour*; it must be noted that the mention of *gods* here in no way impugns monotheistic belief; according to ancient Hebrew belief, the assembly of the gods, or the heavenly host, were wholly subordinate to, and of entirely different nature from, Yahweh (cp. Ps. 7⁷, 82¹); they were conceived of as angelic beings—*i.e.*, as the messengers of God who carried out his will.

The honour and glory with which Yahweh has deigned to crown man are then described by the psalmist: *Thou makest him to have dominion over the works of thine hands . . .*, evidently an echo of

Gen. 1²⁶, 2¹⁹, 20 slightly developed. The repetition of the opening words of praise makes a fitting and noble conclusion to the psalm.

Religious Teaching

The expression of the majesty and glory of God, compressed as it is in Hebrew into little more than half a dozen words, is wonderfully impressive. Prompted by the recognition of God's creative power in contemplating the glorious moon-lit sky, it teaches that one of the most compelling aids to belief is to observe the world of Nature. Very appropriately in this connexion does Kittel quote the words of Kant: "Two things fill the mind with ever-renewed wonder and reverence the more often and persistently thought is occupied with them: the star-lit heavens above me, and the moral law within me."

Unique in the Psalter is the teaching that within the hearts of little children lies enshrined divine strength which has the power to subdue everything; the deep significance of this is only realized when our Lord's words are recalled: "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein" (Mk. 10¹⁵, Lk. 18¹⁷).

Full of instructive beauty is the twofold thought of man's insignificance in the sight of God, and yet of man's dignity as God's highest creation. Of this we refrain from saying more; it would require an essay for itself.

PSALMS 9, 10

MOST modern commentators are agreed that in their original form these two psalms constituted a unity. The reasons for this contention are that in some Hebrew MSS., in the Septuagint and the Vulgate, and in the other Latin Version of Jerome, they appear as a single psalm. Pointing in the same direction is the fact that, taken together, the two psalms form an acrostic; that in a few cases, especially in Ps. 10, the alphabetical letters are wanting is fully explained by the disorder of the text itself in some of the verses. Then it is also to be noted that the "Selah", which never appears at the end of a psalm, occurs in 9²⁰, showing that this cannot originally have been the end of the psalm. But the most convincing reason for regarding these psalms as forming a unity is gained by reading them through without a break; there are throughout the same lines of thought, sometimes identity of expression in the two parts, and the same alternations of subject-matter. Even on the assumption that there are here two distinct psalms, both would have to be assigned to the same writer.

- 15 (16). ו The nations are sunk
in the pit they made;
in the net which they hid
is their foot taken.
- 16 (17). Yahweh hath made known
that he executeth judgement;
in the work of his hands
is the wicked ° ensnared °. Higgsaion. Selah.
- 17 (18). May the wicked ° turn away °
to Sheol, all the nations that forget God.
- 18 (19). ז For not for ever
shall the needy be forgotten,
nor the hope of the afflicted
perish continually.
- 19 (20). Arise Yahweh,
let not man prevail,
let the nations be judged before thee.
- 20 (21). Give, Yahweh,
° fear ° unto them,
let the nations know
that they are but men. Selah.
- Ps. 10. 1. ח Wherefore, Yahweh,
dost thou stand afar?
° Thou hidest thyself ° in the times of ° trouble °.
2. ° In his pride ° the wicked
doth hotly pursue the afflicted,
° he taketh him ° in the devices
which ° he hath conceived °.
3. For the wicked boasteth
of his heart's desire,
and the covetous ° . . .
4. ט The wicked ° contemneth °, in the pride of his countenance,
Yahweh, seeketh (him) not;
"There is no God"
are all his imaginings;
° he prospereth ° in his ways at all times.
5. Thine ordinances are ° far
from his sight °, all his enemies,—he puffeth at them.
6. He saith in his heart: "I,—from generation to generation (I shall
shall not be moved, be) ° without harm. °"
7. י His mouth is full
of deceits and oppression,
under his tongue
mischief and iniquity;
8. He sitteth in ambush in
villages, in hiding-places, ° to slay ° the innocent,
9. יא His eyes are directed against ° the poor °.
He lurketh in a hiding-place,
like a lion ° in a thicket °,
° to catch the afflicted °,
° to draw him ° into his net.
10. He croucheth, he boweth down,
and he falleth by his strong ones °.
11. He saith in his heart;
"God hath forgotten,
He hath hidden his face,
he will never see it."
12. יב Arise, Yahweh, °
lift up thine hand,
forget not the afflicted;
Wherefore should the wicked
contemn God;
he hath said in his heart:
"He will not search it out!"
13. Thou hast seen ° trouble and thou beholdest (it) ° that thou mightest
grief, requite it with thine hand. °
To thee doth the orphan °
leave it, thou art ° his helper °.

15. ש Break the arm of the wicked,^o ^o seek out ^o his wickedness ^o(till) it be not found.^o
16. Yahweh is King
 for ever and ever,
 the nations are perished from his land.
17. ת The desire of the afflicted
 thou hearest, Yahweh,
 ^o thine heart ^o giveth heed,
 thine ear hearkeneth,
18. To vindicate the orphan and the oppressed ;
 that man of the earth
 should terrify no more.^o

Text-critical Notes

1. Read, with G, אֲנִידָה for אֲנִידָה, "I will give thanks". 4. Lit. "done" or "fulfilled". 6. Read the fourth member after the first, as the sense demands. Read אֲנִידָה for אֲנִידָה, "cities". Om. הָפִדוּ, "they". 9. Read אֲנִידָה for אֲנִידָה, "shall be". Read אֲנִידָה for אֲנִידָה, "in trouble". 13. Read, with Baethgen, הִנֵּנִי for הִנֵּנִי, "have mercy upon me". Read אֲנִידָה for אֲנִידָה, "look upon". Read, with one MS., מִשְׁנֵאֵי for מִשְׁנֵאֵי, "from them that hate me". Read, with Gunkel (Marti), מִרְוּמָי for מִרְוּמָי, "lifting me up". 16. Read נִזְנֶשׁ for נִזְנֶשׁ, "ensnaring". 17. Read יִשְׁבּוּ for יִשְׁבּוּ, "they shall turn away". 20. Read, with many MSS., מוֹרָה for מוֹרָה, Ps. 10. 1. Read, with T, הִתְעַלֵּם for הִתְעַלֵּם, "thou makest to hide". Read אֲנִידָה as in 9^o for אֲנִידָה, "in trouble". 2. Read בְּנִגְלוֹת for בְּנִגְלוֹת, "in the pride of". Read יִתְפָּשׁוּ for יִתְפָּשׁוּ, "they are taken". Read הִשְׁבּוּ for הִשְׁבּוּ, "they had conceived". 3. Om. בָּרַךְ "blesseth"; the text is quite out of order. 4. Add נָחַץ from preceding verse. 5. Read, with several commentators, הִתְעַלֵּם for הִתְעַלֵּם, "they?". 5. Lit. "above from before him". 6. Read, with G, בָּלַח רַע. Om. אָלָה, "he hath sworn". 8. Read, with the Versions, יִהְרַג for יִהְרַג, "he doth slay". Read, with the Versions, חֲלָקָה for חֲלָקָה. 9. Read בְּסִכְכָּה for בְּסִכְכָּה. Om. יִתְפָּשׁוּ. Om. יִתְפָּשׁוּ עֲנִי as redundant. Read לְמִשְׁכּוֹ for לְמִשְׁכּוֹ, "when he draweth him". 10. Om. הִתְעַלֵּם? the text defies emendation. 12. Om. אֵל, "O God". 14. Om. בִּי־אֶתָּה, "for thou". Lit. "to give with thine hand". Om. חֲלָקָה, "the poor", which overloads the half-line. Read עֲזָרוּ for עֲזָרוּ, "helping". 15. Om. וְרָע, "and evil", which overloads the half-line. Read תִּדְרוֹשׁ for תִּדְרוֹשׁ, "thou wilt seek out". Read, with S, תִּמְצָא for תִּמְצָא, "thou wilt (not) find". 16. Read לִבָּהּ for לִבָּהּ, "their heart". 18. Om. עוֹד, "yet".

For the title see p. 13.

1-3. Thanksgiving, praise, and rejoicing fill the heart of the psalmist because of the downfall of his enemies. In describing the final destruction of the wicked, 4-8, an eschatological picture is presented; the final judgement is symbolically conceived of as present (cp. Ps. 7⁶). The constant reference to *the nations* points to the overthrow of foreign enemies. 9, 10. The acknowledgement of Yahweh's help in this critical time of trouble, is followed by (11, 12), the exhortation to *praise Yahweh, who sitteth in Zion*, an implicit reference to the temple where Yahweh abides. The subject then changes, and (13, 14), the psalmist speaks of his personal experience. He tells of how Yahweh had *had mercy upon* him, and had saved him from *the gates of death*, a phrase which occurs also in Ps. 107¹⁸; *death*

here is a synonym for Sheol (cp. Isa. 28¹⁹), which, according to one conception, was pictured as a great city, hence the gates (cp. Isa. 38¹⁰). In his deliverance from death the psalmist sees the divine purpose of making him a witness, *that I may show forth all thy praises in the gates of the daughter of Zion*. The curious expression "the gates of the daughter of Zion" is unique in the Psalter (but cp. Isa. 1⁸, Mic. 1¹³, Zech. 2¹⁰ (14)); Zion is synonymous with Jerusalem, each of which is sometimes symbolically represented as the mother of the people (see, e.g., Isa. 37²², Ps. 87), so that by "the daughter" of Zion here is meant the nation united with its "mother." 15-18. The psalmist then reverts to the subject of the nations, but this is interspersed with the theme of the ungodly sinners among the people, for such expressions as *the pit they made*, cp. Ps. 7¹⁵, *the net which they hid*, cp. Ps. 31⁴, *may the wicked turn away to Sheol*, cp. Ps. 31¹⁷, *that forget God*, cp. Ps. 50²², all occur in psalms the subject of which is the persecution of the godly—often the individual psalmist—by the wicked renegades within the nation itself; so that here, when *the needy* and *the afflicted* are spoken of, it is not the nations who maltreat them, but the wicked among the Jews. In 19, 20, however, the main subject of the enemy *nations* is once more taken up, and Yahweh is called upon to judge them, and to inspire them with fear, in order that they may realize their insignificance in his sight as mere men.

In Ps. 10 the subject of the nations is left aside, and the psalmist concentrates on that of the wicked among his own people who persecute the innocent in the land. The psalmist is himself suffering at their hands, and is in grievous trouble; he feels forsaken by Yahweh, and in words which betray a spirit of despair, he cries, 1, *Wherefore, Yahweh, dost thou stand afar? Thou hidest thyself in the times of trouble*; perhaps the note of interrogation should come at the end of the verse. A long description of *the wicked* then follows, 2-11; though spoken of in the singular the word is collective; the picture here presented of the wicked and their course of action may be thus summarized: they glory in their power of being able to plunder the poor; they are not only blasphemous, but they go so far as to deny altogether the existence of God; as so often happens in the case of the wicked, they prosper, and scoff at those who dare protest against their mode of living; relying on the power of wealth, they are persuaded of the permanence of their prosperity. They use every underhand and unscrupulous means of oppressing and getting the better of the less fortunate of their own race, scoffing at the idea that God has any care for them, *God hath forgotten, he hath hidden his face, he will never see it*—i.e., the cruelty of their actions. In v. 10, *he falleth* refers to the *afflicted* in v. 9. The picture is a very dreadful one, and were it not for some ominous passages in the

prophetical writings, it might be thought that the psalmist was somewhat over-stating things; but if, for example, one reads such passages as Isa. 1⁴⁻⁶, 21-23, Mic. 3^{10, 11}, Jer. 5¹⁻⁹, 25-28, among many others, it becomes evident that there is no over-statement here. It is owing to this unrestrained evil-doing of the wicked that the psalmist gives way to the almost irreverent outburst, 12, 13, *Arise, Yahweh, lift up thine hand, forget not the afflicted* . . . Yet his faith remains firm; 14, he does not doubt God's knowledge of the present *trouble and grief*, and knows that God will *requite it*; *to thee doth the orphan leave it, thou art his helper*; this v. (14) is difficult; the text can hardly be in order, but the general sense seems clear. Then, once more (15), the psalmist prays that the *wickedness* of the ungodly may be brought to an end. In v. 16 there is a sudden mention of *the nations* again; this is quite out of harmony with what has preceded and with what follows: *Yahweh is King for ever and ever, therefore the nations are perished out of his land*; it seems as though this verse had become misplaced. On the term Higgsaion see p. 13. 17, 18. The psalm concludes with an expression of certitude that *Yahweh will give heed to the cause of the afflicted, the orphan and the oppressed*.

The points in the religious teaching will come before us in dealing with that of other psalms, the central theme of which is the same as in this psalm.

PSALM 11

COURAGE, supported by faith, is the burden of this psalm. Here is one in grave peril from violent enemies who seek his life. As in so many other psalms of a like nature, nothing is said as to who his enemies were and what was the reason of their enmity; but this is natural enough, for both were matters of common knowledge. His friends counsel flight, urging the murderous intent of his enemies; but for two reasons he scorns their advice; one is his unshakeable trust in Yahweh, the other is the need of his presence in order to champion and support the orthodox among his people. We recognize that this interpretation of one part of the psalm is not usually held; facts in the history of Israel compel us, however, to adopt it (see the exegetical notes). The psalmist's attitude is strengthened by his firm belief in the presence of Yahweh in the temple, and who is yet enthroned in heaven.

There is no reason to doubt that the psalm is pre-exilic.

For the most part the psalm consists of short lines 2 : 2.

For the Precentor : David's.

1. In Yahweh do I trust ;
How say ye to my soul :
° " Flee °° to the mountain ! °
2. For, behold, the wicked
do bend their bow,
they make ready their arrow upon the
string to shoot ° at the upright of heart."
3. If the foundations be destroyed,
what shall the righteous do ° ?
4. Yahweh is in his holy temple, Yahweh, his throne is in the heavens ;
His eyes behold,
his eyelids scrutinize,
the children of men.
5. Yahweh trieth
both righteous and wicked,
him that loveth violence
doth his soul abhor ;
6. He raineth upon the wicked
° coals of ° fire,
a burning wind
is the portion of their cup.
7. For Yahweh is righteous,
he loveth righteous acts,
° the upright ° shall behold ° his face °.

Text-critical Notes

1. Read, with many MSS. and the Versions, נִיָּדוּ for נִיָּדוּ. Read הָרָה, cp. Gen. 14¹⁰, for הָרָה, " your mountain ", and om. צֶפֶר, " bird " (marg. gloss).
2. Om. בְּמוֹעֵפֶל, " in darkness ". 3. Read יַפְעַל for יַפְעַל, " hath done ". 6. Read פְּחֵמִי for פְּחֵמִי, " snares "; and om. וְנִפְרִית, " and brimstone ". 7. Read יִשְׁרִים for יִשְׁרִים, " an upright one ". Read פְּנֵיו for פְּנֵיו, " their face ".

1-3. Protesting against the advice of his friends that he should take to flight, the psalmist affirms that *In Yahweh do I trust*; he then quotes their words giving the reason for their advice; first they say: *Flee to the mountain*; there he will find plenty of hiding-places where he will be safe from his enemies. The Hebrew text adds the word " bird ", but with the one exception of Prov. 26², the verb for " flee " (*nūd*) is never used of birds, and in the *Proverbs* passage it is used artificially to make a word-play with *nūph*, to " fly ". A bird would fly into a tree, not to a distant mountain. The comparison is inept; moreover, the serious position in which the psalmist found himself would make what is, after all, a playful comparison, inappropriate. The addition of " bird ", which stands isolated from the sentence, must be regarded as a marginal gloss, inserted later by a copyist in the text. The psalmist's friends then go on to explain why he should flee: *the wicked do bend their bow . . .*; it is not indicated who these *wicked* are, nor why they are seeking the life of the psalmist (but see below); they are compared with hunters who shoot at the upright of heart (plural); the Hebrew text adds " in darkness ", but how can they see to shoot in the dark? Either the text is corrupt, or it is a glossator's thoughtless addition; the text reads more smoothly by omitting it. To this the

psalmist replies, giving the reason why he will not think of fleeing, and enabling us to understand the whole position: *If the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?* We have here a cryptic reference to the religious-political strife which in different forms broke out during most periods of the history of Israel; for the causes of this and other details we must refer to the chapter on "Saints and Sinners in the Psalms" (pp. 56 ff.). Here it will suffice to say that this strife centred in the opposition between the upholders of ancient tradition and the innovators who introduced changes in traditional usages (cp. Jer. 16¹⁶, 17). In the psalm the former are appropriately designated *the foundations*; if these are *destroyed, what shall the righteous do?* The "righteous" are, of course, those who cling to ancient custom as handed down; "the wicked" (*Rēša'im*) are the innovators. This strife is referred to again and again in the psalms; that it was at times attended by violence is evident from what the psalmists say; at the same time, a little over-statement must sometimes be allowed for on the part of those who were not infrequently the victims of unscrupulous antagonists.

4-6. The psalmist then replies further to the fears of his friends. He reminds them, first, that *Yahweh is in his holy temple, i.e.,* he is in their midst; the scene is thus laid in Jerusalem; but more than that, for though the divine presence is often in the sanctuary, *his throne is in the heavens*, high above the earth, whence he looks down and sees all that happens, and all that is done by men, on earth: *His eyes behold, his eyelids scrutinize, the children of men*; he tests *both righteous and wicked*, and as the All-righteous, he *doth abhor him that loveth violence*. The punishment for such is then described in words no less terrible for being metaphorical: *He raineth upon the wicked coals of fire; a burning wind is the portion of their cup*; here we have echoes of the theophany, cp. Ps. 18^{12, 13}. For this meaning of "cup" in the sense of "destiny", cp. Ps. 16⁵. (7). In contrast to the terrible lot of the wicked that of the righteous is briefly indicated; the prophetic teaching on the ethical righteousness of Yahweh as one who *loveth righteous acts*, is here echoed, cp. Ps. 33⁵; the reward of *the upright* is that they *shall behold his face*, cp. Ps. 17¹⁵; the meaning here is perhaps that they shall apprehend his presence in the sanctuary; see Ps. 3³⁻⁷, 63²; but the expression is sometimes used in a more literal sense (cp. Exod. 24¹¹).

Religious Teaching

The primary subject in the religious teaching of this psalm—namely, trust in Yahweh, be the adverse conditions what they may—is a fundamental religious element which is taught in a great many psalms. As this will come before us again and again, we shall say no more about it here. Another matter, very briefly hinted at in the psalm, is the difficult question as to how far innovations or modifications, whether in

doctrinal expression or in the cultus, are advisable and justified. The psalmist, influenced as it would seem by Jeremiah, implicitly insists on following in the "old paths", as the prophet expresses it. We can do no more here, it will readily be realized, than merely mention this very controversial and vast subject. But it is of much interest to find that the religious principles involved—principles which have so often exercised the minds of men in the history of religion—should be hinted at in this psalm, though it be in but very few words.

PSALM 12

THE psalmist depicts a condition of deplorable degeneracy among a section of his people. The main indictment which he brings against them is that of lying and false speaking, which may well reflect conditions similar to those referred to in Ps. 11. The reference to the ill-treatment of the poor in the community who clung to traditional usages points to this. The words put into the mouth of the tyrants, "Who is our master?", together with the insistence on the pure words of Yahweh, mark them as religious renegades, probably the innovators referred to in Ps. 11. The main purpose, however, of the psalmist is to declare that Yahweh is about to put an end to all this.

Like Ps. 11 this, too, is pre-exilic.

The metre again consists of the short half-lines, as in Ps. 11, with two beats.

1. *For the Precentor : On the eighth. A Psalm. David's.*
- 1 (2). Help, Yahweh,
for ° love ° hath ceased,
for faithfulness ° is no more °
among the sons of men ;
- 2 (3). They utter ° falsehood °
each to his neighbour,
flattering lip,
a double heart. °
- 3 (4). May Yahweh cut off
all flattering lips,
the tongue that speaketh great things ;
- 4 (5). they that say :
" ° With ° our tongue will we prevail,
our lips are ° our own °,
who is our master ? "
- 5 (6). " Because of the ° oppression ° of the afflicted,
Because of the sighing of the poor,
now will I arise ", saith Yahweh,
" ° I will give (him) the help °
he panteth for. "
- 6 (7). The words of Yahweh
are pure words,
tried silver, °
purified seven times.

- 7 (8). Thou, Yahweh, ° wilt keep us, °
 thou wilt preserve us from a generation
 ° worthless and unrighteous °;
 8 (9). The wicked walk around
 when worthlessness is exalted
 among the sons of men.

Text-critical Notes

1. Read קָסֵר for קָסִיר, "godly one"; the verb נִמַּר is not used in reference to men, cp. Pss. 57³, 138⁸. Lit. "hath come to an end", read נִסְכָּסִי, cp. Isa. 16⁴, since the verb פָּסַס is otherwise unknown. 2. Lit. "vanity", cp. Pss. 41⁶, 144^{8, 11}. Om. the repetition of יָדָרִי, which overloads the line. 4. Read בָּ for לָ, "to". Lit. "with us". 5. Lit. "destruction". Lit. "I will set (him) in safety". 6. Om. בְּעֵלִי לְאֶרֶץ, "in a furnace on the earth", which overloads the line; probably a marg. gloss. 7. Read, with some MSS. and the Versions, הַשְׁמֵרֵנִי for הַמִּשְׁמֵרֵנִי — "wilt keep them". Read, with many commentators, וְלֹא יִנָּל for וְלֹא יִנָּל, "which is for ever".

For the title see p. 12.

1, 2. Yahweh's help is called for because *love* and *faithfulness* have disappeared from *among the sons of men*; this, as *vv.* 5, 6, show, is an over-statement prompted by the psalmist's righteous indignation at the action of a section among his people. The indictment is that *they utter falsehood* (lit. "vanity" or "nothingness", cp. Ps. 41⁶, 144^{8, 11}), speak with *flattering lip*, and are guilty of harbouring a *double heart*. These expressions bear out exactly what the sequel (*vv.* 3, 4) shows to have been the cause of the psalmist's cry for help; they refer to the attitude of a party in the land, led by the ruling class, and therefore the more wealthy among the people, who did not hold firmly to traditional belief and practice; what they urged in support of their views the psalmist describes as *falsehood*; the *flattering*, lit. "smooth", *lip* refers to the way in which they sought to persuade others, their *neighbours*, that their teaching was right; and the *double heart* points to their holding partly to the traditions handed down, but mainly to their advocacy of newfangled ideas and practices. The conditions are, in fact, the same as those reflected in Ps. 11 (for details see pp. 56 ff.). 3, 4. As one of the orthodox who clung to the "old paths" (Jer. 6¹⁶), the psalmist desiderates that *Yahweh* would *cut off all flattering lips*, and *the tongue that speaketh great things*, i.e., the extolling of their point of view, and their lofty superiority in insisting that what they taught was right and edifying: *with our tongue will we prevail*; they scoffed at the orthodox who maintained that they must be guided by traditional ordinances and precepts as handed down by their forefathers: *our lips are our own, who is our master?* 5. The words which the psalmist then puts into the mouth of Yahweh point to the fact that the wealthier classes referred to maltreated their poorer and helpless brethren because they clung to the time-honoured and familiar beliefs and practices. 6. By *the words of Yahweh* are meant the traditional Law and teaching of

the Mosaic revelation ; these must stand, for they *are pure words, tried silver, purified seven times*. 7. Yahweh, from whom such words come, will *preserve* his faithful ones *from a generation worthless and unrighteous*. The final words, it must be granted, make a disappointing conclusion ; the text may well be corrupt ; but the emendations suggested are somewhat drastic ; it is possible that they are a copyist's remark placed originally in the margin.

For the religious teaching see the final section to Ps. 11.

PSALM 13

THIS psalm is a beautiful instance of the intimate relationship felt by a sufferer between himself and his God ; the outpouring of the innermost feelings of the heart tells of one for whom God is a loving Friend. However protracted his suffering may be, it does not affect his deep conviction that ultimately God will help him. The enemy spoken of would seem to be a personal one ; there is nothing in the psalm which suggests the type of enemy referred to in the two preceding psalms ; nor does the psalmist call upon God to take vengeance on his enemy, or enemies (*v.* 4). There is no mention of sickness ; the psalmist's suffering seems to be purely mental.

It is impossible to assign a date to the psalm, either pre- or post-exilic.

The metre, but for the first line of *v.* 5, is 2 : 2.

1. *For the Precentor : A Psalm. David's.*
- 1 (2). How long, Yahweh,
wilt thou ever forget me ?
How long wilt thou hide
thy face from me ?
- 2 (3). How long shall I harbour
° sorrows ° in my soul,
grief in my heart,
day ° and night ° ?
How long shall mine enemy
be exalted over me ?
- 3 (4). Look upon me, answer me,
Yahweh, my God ;
Lighten mine eyes
lest I sleep in death ;
- 4 (5). Lest mine enemy say :
" I have prevailed against him " ;
Lest mine adversaries rejoice
because I am moved.
- 5 (6). As for me, in thy love do I trust, may my heart rejoice in thy succour ;
I will sing to Yahweh,
for he dealeth bountifully with me.

Text-critical Notes

². Read עֲצוֹת (cp. Prov. 15¹³) for עֲצוֹת, " counsels ". Add, with G, וְלִקְחָהּ.

1, 2. Wearied with ceaseless menaces from his enemy, the psalmist pathetically cries: *How long, Yahweh?* The fourfold repetition: *How long?* tells of the despair of a worried heart. To the psalmist it seems as though Yahweh had forgotten him, had *hidden his face from him*, so that *day and night* he pines over the *sorrows* and *grief* that overwhelm him. *How long* is this *enemy* going to lord it over him? he asks 3, 4. Then, in his disconsolate state, he lifts up his prayer: *Look upon me, answer me, Yahweh, my God*; in his dejection he even fears the approach of death, and therefore pleads: *Lighten mine eyes lest I sleep in death*, cp. 1 Sam. 14²⁷ (the expression "lighten mine eyes" is used in a different sense in Ps. 19⁸); for the thought of death as a sleep cp. Job 3¹³. And he thinks how grievous it would be if those who were against him should mock at his trust in Yahweh, and boast of having *prevailed against him*, and should rejoice at his downfall. 5. But, in spite of all, the psalmist's faith in Yahweh holds firm; he *trusts* in his *love*, and believes that his *heart* will *rejoice* because of the *succour* that shall be accorded him; and he looks forward in confidence to the time when he *will sing to Yahweh*, for he knows by past experience that he *deals bountifully* with him; a similar expression occurs in Pss. 116⁷, 119¹⁷.

Religious Teaching

Very short as this psalm is, it brings out forcibly the great truth that trouble, though long-drawn-out, does not mean that God has no care for those who trust in him. The reason why relief does not come is doubtless often hidden; in many cases it will be the sufferer's own fault, which in his blindness he does not realize; in other cases it may be for his own ultimate good, as many a sufferer has found. But the psalm teaches the beautiful lesson that the true believer in God will not be shaken in his faith, however severe the stroke: "For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life . . . shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. viii. 38, 39).

PSALM 14—see Psalm 53

PSALM 15

THIS psalm presents us with the scene of one coming up to the temple to worship; at the entrance to the sanctuary the priest, appealing to Yahweh, asks who is worthy to enter into his place of worship. The worshipper gives the reply, in which he describes what must be the moral condition of him who is worthy to enter, implying that he fulfils

the divine requirement. Thereupon the priest assures him that "he that doeth these things shall never be moved."

It may well be that we have here the echo of earlier custom, according to which worshippers were questioned as to their ritual fitness to enter the sanctuary, a custom known in all probability in Israel, even though we have no direct mention of it, for it was certainly in vogue among other peoples. But in this psalm we have the reminiscence of the custom, not the account of a ritual which took place in the psalmist's day; had that been the case, some mention of the worshipper's entry into the sanctuary could hardly have been omitted, as that would have formed part of the ceremony; whereas our psalm ends with a pious ejaculation, in which there is not even any intimation that the worshipper may now proceed into the "tabernacle".

The psalm refers to man's duty to God and his neighbour, and is thus in the nature of a commentary on Deut. 6⁵, Lev. 19¹⁸, and this stress on the moral law is very striking; but to argue from this that the psalmist depreciates the ceremonial law is quite beside the mark, for the entry into the temple was for the purpose of taking part in sacrificial worship; that was the *raison d'être* of the sanctuary.

The post-exilic date of the psalm is shown by the psalmist's knowledge of the Deuteronomic Code and the Code of Holiness, from the latter he quotes Lev. 25³⁷ in v. 5.

The metre alternates between 3 : 3 and short half-lines of two beats, 2 : 2.

1. *A Psalm. David's.*
- 1 (2). Yahweh, who shall sojourn in thy
tabernacle? who shall dwell on thy holy hill?
- 2 (3). He that walketh uprightly,
and worketh righteousness;
and speaketh truth,
and slandereth not with his tongue,
- 3 (4). that doeth no harm to his neighbour, and taketh not up a reproach against
his near one;
- 4 (5). Despised in his eyes is the reprobate, but he honoureth them that fear
Yahweh,
that sweareth ° to his neighbour °,
and changeth not;
- 5 (6). His money he putteth not out on usury, and a bribe against the innocent he
receiveth not.
He that doeth these things
shall never be moved.

Text-critical Notes

2. Om. בִּלְקָבוֹ. 4. Read, with G, לִרְעוּ.

1. The psalm opens abruptly with a twofold question put to Yahweh *Who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell on thy holy hill?* This is a form of address to God which occurs

elsewhere only in Ps. 10¹, 13¹, 22¹, 74¹. The use of "tabernacle" for the temple is an archaism as in Ps. 61⁴, and accords with the ancient custom which the psalm echoes (see above). The "dwelling" on the holy hill, *i.e.*, of Zion, may well reflect, as Kittel points out, the custom of pilgrims who came for the feasts and pitched their tents in the vicinity of the temple. In what follows the psalmist puts into the mouth of the supposed worshipper a description of the moral state of one who may be deemed worthy to enter the sanctuary. 2. First, there is his duty to God: *he that walketh uprightly* refers to a manner of life lived in accordance with the will of God (cp. Isa. 33¹⁵, Prov. 28^{6, 18}); *and worketh righteousness* refers to the fulfilling of the divine laws (cp. Isa. 56¹); the whole duty of man to God is thus included in these two short sayings. The duty to his neighbour is described in more detail because the psalmist takes up the rôle of a moral teacher rather than that of a spiritual guide. Speaking the truth and (3) refraining from slander are parallel with *doeth no harm to his neighbour*, and *taketh not up a reproach against his near one*; sins very prevalent, as so many psalms illustrate. 4. The next thing required is that he should *despise the reprobate*; this, in view of the *honouring of them that fear Yahweh*, must mean the renegade who denies Yahweh; with these renegades, again, many psalmists deal; they were a danger to the community. Then, the faithful worshipper must be one who keeps an oath made to his neighbour, and does not *change* his mind; the keeping of an oath thoughtlessly taken might often involve disagreeable consequences, but it must be kept under all circumstances, especially as the oath was often taken in Yahweh's name. 5. He must, moreover, be strictly honest in money matters, and may *not put his money out on usury*; this sin was evidently a very common one, judging from such passages as Exod. 22²⁵, Lev. 25³⁷, Deut. 23²⁰, Ezek. 18⁸, 22¹², and the same applies to the receiving of *bribes*, cp. Exod. 23⁸, Deut. 27²⁵, Isa. 1²³, Ezek. 22¹², and often elsewhere. The words are then put into the mouth of the priest: *He that doeth these things shall never be moved*, *i.e.*, he will continue in prosperity, cp. Pss. 10⁶, 16⁸, 112⁶, and elsewhere. The absence of any reference to more heinous forms of sin is because those guilty of such would not have the effrontery to seek to enter the sanctuary.

Religious Teaching.

The psalm teaches the indissoluble connexion which should exist between ethics and religion. The moral law is to be observed not only for its intrinsic excellence, but primarily because it is based on divine precepts. The motive force of doing what is right must be a true perception of the relation between man and God, together with a

realization of the truth that human perfection can be attained only by acting in accordance with the will of God (cp. Matth. 5⁴⁸).

PSALM 16

THIS psalm is a beautiful example of a psalmist's communing with God. It is an outpouring of gratitude, and portrays vividly the sense of contentment with his lot felt by the psalmist; he cannot sufficiently express his soul-felt recognition of the fact that his happy state is solely due to the lovingkindness of God. He contrasts this with the pitiable plight of those who worship any deity other than Yahweh. The proneness to idolatry among the people is ominously illustrated, *e.g.*, in Isa. 57³⁻⁸, especially *vv.* 5, 6, which the psalmist seems to have in mind. But this thought is fleeting; and he speedily reverts to his main theme of joyful recognition of the favour shown to him by Yahweh; his sense of gratitude is increased by the certitude that this loving mercy will continue, and that he will be kept from all harm.

That the psalm is of post-exilic date is suggested by the evident reminiscence of Isa. 57^{5, 6}.

The metre is mainly 2 : 2 half-lines, interspersed here and there with three beats to the half-line.

Miktam. David's.

1. Preserve me, O God,
for I trust in thee.
2. ° I said ° to Yahweh ° :
"Thou art ° my welfare °,
° it all resteth on thee." °
3. As for the holy ones in the land,
they ° all are my delight. °
4. Their sorrows ° are increased °
° that choose ° another (god);
I will not pour out their drink-offerings
of blood, nor take their names upon my lips.
5. "Yahweh, ° thou allottest °
my portion and my cup,
° thou holdest ° my destiny."
6. The lots are fallen unto me in pleasant
places, yea, ° mine heritage ° is beautiful to me.
7. I bless Yahweh
who hath given me counsel,
yea, at nights ° he instructeth me ° in my ° inmost being °.
8. I set Yahweh
before me always;
if ° he ° is at my right-hand I shall not be moved.
9. Therefore my heart is glad,
and ° my very self ° rejoiceth,
yea, my flesh doth dwell in safety.
10. "For thou wilt not abandon
my soul to Sheol;
thou wilt not suffer thy godly one
to see the Pit;
11. Thou wilt show me the path of life, in thy presence is fulness of joy,
raptures at thy right-hand are for evermore."

Text-critical Notes

2. Read, with some MSS. and the Versions, אֶמְרָתִי for אֶמְרָתְךָ, "thou hast said". Om. אֲדֹנָי "my Lord", for the rhythm's sake. Lit. "my good", cp. Ps. 106⁶. Lit. "all of it is on thee", read, with Kittel, בִּלְךָ for בִּלְךָ, "not". 3. Om. וְאֶתֵּיָרִי, "and the excellent ones of", and om. בֵּינֵם, "among them"; the text seems to have been worked over. 4. Read, with ST, יִרְבֵּי for יִרְבֵּי. Read, with Kittel, פָּחָדִי for פָּחָדִי, "they exchange". 5. Read, with Gunkel, מִנְיָה for מִנְיָה, "the lot". Read, with some MSS., cp. Gunkel, תִּמְכֵּן, lit. "holding" (cp. Prov. 31¹⁹), for תִּמְכֵּן, "thou maintainest". 6. Read, with GS, נַחֲלָתִי for נַחֲלָתִי, "an heritage". 7. Read, with some MSS., יִפְרְנֵי for יִפְרְנֵי, "they instruct me". 8. Add חַיִּים for the rhythm's sake. 9. Read, with Gunkel, כִּבְדִּי, lit. "my liver", for כִּבְדִּי, "my glory".

1. The prayer with which the psalm opens, *Preserve me, O God*, is, as the following verse shows, for the continuance of the happy conditions under which the psalmist is living. It is the prayer of faith: *for I trust in thee*. 2. The psalmist realizes that it is to Yahweh alone that he owes his present prosperous state, *Thou art my welfare*, and that its continuance depends solely on Yahweh, *it all resteth on thee*. 3, 4. In accordance with his close walk with God is his companionship with those only who are like-minded with himself, his *delight is in the holy ones in the land*; the term used here for "holy ones" (*q'dōšīm*) occurs in 34⁹ and Deut. 33³. With these are contrasted those *that choose another god*; the text here is somewhat uncertain, and the suggested emendations vary considerably; but the sense of our rendering, based on the context, is clear enough; for the expression "another god" ("god" being understood) see Isa. 42⁸, while in Exod. 34¹⁴ the full term "another god" occurs. The psalmist says of these idolaters *that their sorrows are increased*, a statement based doubtless on observation (cp., on the other hand, Ps. 147³), and he repudiates the very idea of partaking in their idolatrous worship: *I will not pour out their drink-offerings of blood*; the reference is to what is said in Isa. 57^{5, 6}, where the prophet inveighs against them "that slay the children in the valleys, under the clefts of the rocks"; to idols have they "poured a drink-offering". His detestation of those who are guilty of such abominations is such that the psalmist will not even *take their names upon his lips*. The mention of these worshippers of a false god in such a very different context is distressing evidence of the influence which contact with alien peoples had upon many of the Jews during the Persian period (cp. Isa. 58^{3, 4}). But the psalmist does not permit these distasteful things to dwell in his mind. He turns to the main theme of his psalm, and again delights in acknowledging Yahweh as the source of all his happiness; 5, 6: *Yahweh, thou allottest my portion and my cup, thou holdest my destiny, i.e., it is in the hands of Yahweh*; the use of these three words emphasizes the psalmist's full apprehension of the fact that all the material benefits which he enjoys are vouchsafed

by the bounty of Yahweh; and he further enlarges on this by referring to the land which he possesses: *the lots*,—a different word from that used for “destiny” which also means “lot”, and is often used in reference to land, e.g., Ps. 105¹¹—*the lots are fallen unto me in pleasant places, yea, mine heritage is beautiful to me*. 7. But greater than material benefits is the spiritual blessing of divine guidance; and the psalmist tells of his communing with Yahweh in the silent night-time, when God reveals his will to him: *who hath given me counsel, yea, he instructeth me in my inmost being*; this last expression is lit. “my kidneys”, used in Hebrew in reference to what was conceived of as the most sensitive and vital part of man, cp. Pss. 73²¹, 139¹³. 8. Acting in accordance with this guidance, the psalmist says: *I set Yahweh before me always*; he knows that he will *not be moved*; 9, and therefore his *heart is glad, and my very self rejoiceth*; the word we have rendered “very self” is lit. “liver”, conceived of as the centre of human feelings, cp. Lam. 2¹¹; the Hebrew has “my glory”, but a parallel to “my heart”, is more appropriate; the consonants are the same in the Hebrew words, so that the confusion arose easily; the following mention of *my flesh* also points to the correctness of the emendation. 10, 11. Finally, the psalmist expresses his conviction that God *will not abandon his soul to Sheol, nor suffer his godly one to see the Pit*; meaning that God will preserve him in life, and will guide him in his *path through life*; walking with God is *fulness of joy*, at his side there are ever *raptures*, the rendering “pleasures” is not strong enough. There is no reference here to life hereafter; the psalmist is speaking of his present life; *evermore*, as often elsewhere, means “constantly”, or “always”, cp. Ps. 15⁵.

Religious Teaching

First must be noted, as already pointed out, the teaching that man's destiny is in the hands of God. This does not, of course, deny human free-will; it is when this is exercised in accordance with God's will that man's lot is shaped by God. The psalm teaches, further, that the enjoyment of prosperity in life is greatest when it is recognized that this is granted by God. And, lastly, there is the expression of deep trust in God, characteristic of all the psalmists, which knows that where he is guide all is well.

PSALM 17

THE psalmist, conscious of his innocence and uprightness of life, appeals to God for protection and deliverance from the enemies by whom he is beset. As in so many other psalms in which the writers

appear as the victims of bitter enmity, no indication is given as to the cause of this. That the enemies here spoken of are not aliens, but of the same race as the psalmist himself, may be regarded as certain; had they been Gentiles, the fact would have been made clear, see, *e.g.*, Pss. 43¹, 83^{3, 4} and elsewhere. It will be noticed that while "enemies" are spoken of, the singular is used in v. 13; the same occurs in some other psalms of this character, and points to some particular adversary among many. The subject of these enemies of the psalmists is dealt with on pp. 56 ff.

The text in some verses is very corrupt, and some of our renderings are necessarily uncertain. There are cases in which the Hebrew as it stands is meaningless.

The date is post-exilic; more than that cannot be said. The metre is mainly 2 : 2 : 2 : 2, but 3 : 3 also occurs, and sometimes a single three-beat line.

A Prayer. David's.

1. Hear, ° O God of my righteousness, °
hearken unto my cry,
give ear to my prayer
from lips not deceitful.
2. Let my cause come forth from thy presence, let ° mine eyes ° behold equity.
3. Thou hast proved mine heart,
thou hast visited me at night,
thou hast tried me, and findest not
° wickedness in me °.
My mouth shall not transgress
4. after the deeds of men;
° the command of ° thy lips
do I observe.
° From ° the ways of the violent
5. ° thou holdest ° my goings,
in thy paths my footsteps are not moved.
6. I cry unto thee,
for thou hearest me, O God;
incline thine ear to me,
hearken to my speech.
7. Show wondrously thy lovingkindnesses,
thou that savest them that trust,
with thy right-hand, from them that rise up.
8. Keep me as the apple of the eye, in the shadow of thy wings hide me,
9. From the face of the wicked that despoil me,
my deadly enemies,
they compass me about.
10. ° With fat their heart ° they close, with their mouth they speak with
arrogance;
11. Now ° they advance, ° they surround me,
° their heart ° they set,
° to cast down ° to the ground.
12. ° Their intent against me ° is like a lion
that is eager to rehd,
and like a young lion lurking in secret.
13. Arise, Yahweh,
come before him, cast him down, save my soul from the wicked one;
with thy sword 14. ° slay them °,
with thine own hand, Yahweh;
° destroy them ° from the world,
° snatch them from life °.

With thy treasure fill their belly,
 let them be sated ° therewith °,
 and let them leave their residue to their babes.
 As for me, in righteousness
 will I behold thy face,
 I shall be satisfied when I awake with thine appearance.

15.

Text-critical Notes

1. Read יְהוָה צֶדֶק (cp. Ps. 4²) for יְהוָה צֶדֶק , "Yahweh, righteousness".
 2. Read, with G, עֵינַי for עֵינַי , "thine eyes". 3. Read כִּי זָמָה for זָמָה , "I have devised". 4. Read בְּדָבָר for בְּדָבָר , "in, or by, the command of". Add מִ . Read הַחֲמוֹד for חֲמוֹד , "to hold". 10. Read, with Kittel, לִבָּם לֶחֶם (cp. Ps. 73⁷, 119⁷⁰) for לִבָּם לֶחֶם , "their fat". 11. Read אֲשָׁרֵינוּ for אֲשָׁרֵינוּ , "our footsteps". Read לְעֵינֵיהֶם for לְעֵינֵיהֶם , "their eyes". Read, with Buttenwieser, לִנְטוֹת for לִנְטוֹת , "to bend". 12. Read, with Gunkel, דְּמִיּוֹתִי for דְּמִיּוֹתִי , lit. "they devise against me" (cp. 2 Sam. 21⁸), for דְּמִיּוֹתִי , "his likeness". 14. Read, with Gressmann, quoted by Gunkel, $\text{הַמִּיּוֹתָם, הַחֲמוֹדִים}$ for הַחֲמוֹדִים , "sons". Read, with Hans Schmidt, בָּנָי for בָּנָי , "sons".

The designation "A Prayer" is in this case very appropriate. On the name of David in so many titles, see p. 10.

1. The danger, as the sequel shows, confronting the psalmist prompts his urgent appeal to God: *Hear, hearken, give ear* (cp. Ps. 4⁴, 5^{2, 3}). For the address to the Almighty as *God of my righteousness* meaning that his righteousness is of God, cp. Ps. 4²; this is the rendering of the Septuagint, and commends itself in view of the protestation of innocence which follows. The psalmist urges the sincerity of his prayer by saying that it is *from lips not deceitful*, lit. "in not lips of deceit," a pregnant phrase in Hebrew difficult to render adequately without paraphrasing. In 2, the expressions are forensic; God is thought of as on the judgement-seat, and the psalmist's cause has come before him; therefore he prays that his vindication may come forth from the divine *presence*, and that he may see the justice of God: *let mine eyes behold equity*. 3-5. The way in which these verses are divided in the Hebrew text is clearly wrong; the text has suffered considerable corruption; emendations cannot but be tentative. Of the general meaning, however, there is no doubt: it is a protestation of innocence on the part of the psalmist in a somewhat boastful strain; but it must be remembered in extenuation that there is at the back of his mind the constant thought of the wickedness of his enemies. He confidently addresses the Almighty in words expressive of a sense of innocence; God has *proved his heart*, witnessing to the psalmist's intimate communion with God, especially when in the silence of night there is nothing to distract his thoughts: *thou hast visited me at night* (cp. Ps. 16⁷). The divine scrutiny has been, the psalmist feels, searching; he uses three expressions in regard to it: *thou hast proved, visited, tried*; nevertheless, he can say that God *finds not wickedness in*

him. As in the past, so shall it be in the future : *my mouth shall not transgress after, i.e., in imitation of, the deeds of men*, in reference to the slanderous attacks of his enemies ; far from that, he *observes the command of thy lips* (for the anthropomorphism cp. Ps. 89³⁴). But it is noteworthy that the sense of his own righteousness does not prevent the psalmist from recognizing to whom this is due ; it is God who *holds him from the ways of the violent* ; and following *in thy paths my footsteps are not moved*, a figurative way of saying that he who lives in accordance with divine guidance is safe from harm. 6-9. The psalmist then raises again the voice of prayer with which he began, and now says definitely what has called forth his petition, namely the menace of those *that rise up—i.e., his enemies*. In 7, the Hebrew is difficult to translate, more especially when seeking to reproduce the rhythm ; but the general sense is clear ; the psalmist prays : *Show wondrously thy lovingkindnesses* (cp. Ps. 31²¹) ; in what follows the text has suffered some corruption, and there seems also to have been some displacement of the words ; our rendering reads awkwardly owing to the desire to keep as closely as possible to the Hebrew ; the meaning is clearer if the words are arranged thus : *thou that savest with thy right-hand them that trust (in thee) from them that rise up*. 8. Very graphically does the psalmist then express his longing for divine protection : *Keep me as the apple of the eye* ; for the expression cp. Deut. 32¹⁰, Prov. 7² ; the word rendered “ apple ” is in Hebrew *ish*, “ man ” with the termination *-ôn*, signifying a diminutive, thus “ little man ” ; this must originally have had reference to the widespread belief that the soul resided in the pupil of the eye ; the reflection of anyone looking into the eye of another suggested the presence there of a “ little man,” *i.e., the soul*. This is the origin of the expression, though to the psalmist it may merely have meant something very precious. Another old-world conception is reflected in the words : *in the shadow of thy wings hide me* ; this is probably of Egyptian origin ; representations of the “ winged solar disk ” are frequent ; for the winged sun-god Horus see Erman, *Die Religion des Ägypter*, pp. 28 f. (1934). 9-12. How urgent the need is for him to be protected *from the face of the wicked that despoil me*, the psalmist then sets forth by the description of his *deadly enemies* (lit. “ mine enemies against the soul ”, *i.e., life*), who *compass him about*. He says of them : *with fat their heart they close* ; the expression is a strange one, meaning that they shut their heart to all feelings of compassion (cp. Job 15²⁷) ; *with their mouth they speak with arrogance*, so that both inwardly and outwardly they are cruel. The next v. 11 is again difficult ; the text cannot be in order, as it stands it reads : “ our steps now have they surrounded me ” ; our emendation involves but a slight alteration ; the psalmist is describing the approach of his enemies, and says : *Now they advance, they surround*

me. The rest of the verse is very variously emended and explained by commentators; the Hebrew verb for "they set" is never used in connexion with "eyes", but frequently with "heart" in the sense of setting the mind to do something (e.g., Ps. 48, Prov. 22¹⁷ and elsewhere); we have, therefore, emended the text so as to read "their heart" for "their eyes"; somewhat drastic, we admit, but at any rate it gives sense; the enemies are bent on *casting him to the ground, i.e., on destroying him*. This is supported by what follows, 12, *their intent against me is like a lion*, lit. "they devise against me," a slight emendation for the meaningless "his likeness." The comparison with a lion occurs several times elsewhere (Pss. 7², 10,⁹ 17¹², 22¹³). 13, 14. The psalmist then calls upon Yahweh to *arise*, and *cast down* his enemy, *the wicked one*; the use of the singular is probably in reference to the leader among his adversaries. In what follows we have an illustration of the bitterness of a revengeful spirit which to our ears is distasteful. The text is again corrupt in parts, and the precise meaning of the last part of the verse is very difficult to determine; we suggest tentatively that *thy treasure* is used here, as the verb in Job 21¹⁹, in the sense of "retribution" or the like; the psalmist expresses the wish that his enemies and their children may be overtaken by divine vengeance. In contrast to this the psalmist (15) says that he *will behold God's face in righteousness*, adding: *I shall be satisfied when I awake with thine appearance*. Taken in contrast with what is said in v. 14, there is some justification for the view that the psalmist envisages, though it be but vaguely, awaking from the sleep of death; this would be prompted by his sense of close communion with God as exhibited in the opening verses of the psalm; his unexpressed thought may well have been: How can communion with the ever-living God be broken by death? This view is not held by all commentators.

Religious Teaching

Of this, apart from the opening and concluding verses, there is not much to be said. The psalm teaches, it is true, implicit faith in God and in his justice. But apart from this, the exaggerated sense of righteousness, and the terrible feeling of revenge expressed, are distasteful elements. As warnings such things may have their uses. The teaching, however, in the last verse is very different. If, as may well be the case, there occur here the beginnings of the apprehension of a fuller life hereafter, then we have in this psalm one of the few instances of this in the Psalter, a fact not to be lightly passed over.

PSALM 18

THIS psalm occurs also in 2 Sam. 22. Probably both go back independently to an earlier form, the differences being due to the vicissitudes of transmission. That each has some textual corruptions, as in the case of most of the psalms, is only to be expected; the one can, however, be corrected by the other in a number of passages. The psalm has been worked over and added to both for doctrinal and liturgical purposes; but in its original form it is certainly one of the most ancient in the Psalter. The occasion is clearly indicated at its conclusion; it was composed to commemorate the victory of a king over his enemies. While Davidic authorship cannot be claimed for it as it stands, there is no reason to doubt that in some early form of it, David may, at any rate, have inspired it. Some commentators are inclined to cut it up rather unnecessarily, as it appears to us; that there are unevennesses and some lack of logical sequence is not to be denied, and some additions have clearly been made; but, taking it as a whole, the psalm forms a unity.

After some opening words of praise and thanksgiving for having been rescued from the hands of enemies, the writer launches forth into a description of the theophany. There follows a further recognition of deliverance from foes, a deliverance which the psalmist—either the king or a court-poet in his name—feels is according to his deserts, since his faithfulness to Yahweh has always stood firm. Then there is a renewed expression of praise and gratitude to Yahweh who has helped him to overcome his enemies, namely “foreign nations”; and their utter defeat is described.

The date of the psalm, *as we now have it*, is probably late pre-exilic, excepting for a few later additions. In this form there is good reason to believe that Josiah is the king in question.

The metre is almost uniformly 3 : 3.

1. *For the Precentor : David's, the servant of Yahweh ; who spake unto Yahweh the words of this song in the day that Yahweh delivered him from the grasp of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul ;*
2. *and he said :*

- | | | | |
|---|------|---|---|
| 1 | (3). | I love thee, Yahweh, my strength ; | |
| 2 | (4). | ° My rock, my stronghold, and
my deliverer, | my God, my refuge, in him do I trust ; |
| | | My shield, and the horn of my safety ° ; | |
| 3 | (5). | Worthy to be praised is he ; I
called upon Yahweh, | and from mine enemies I have been
delivered. |
| 4 | (6). | ° The waves of ° death encom-
passed me, | and the floods of destruction terrified
me ; |
| 5 | (7). | The cords of Sheol surrounded me, | and the snares of death came upon me. |
| 6 | (8). | In my trouble I called on Yahweh,
He heard my voice from his
sanctuary, | and unto my God I cried ; |
| 7 | (9). | The earth shook and trembled, | and my cry came ° into his ears.
the foundations of the mountains
quaked, |

They reeled to and fro because he was wrath ;

8 (10). Smoke went up from his nostrils,
coals kindled because of him.

9 (11). He bowed the heavens and
descended,

10 (12). And he rode upon a cherub, and
flew,

11 (13). He made darkness his hiding-
place,

12 (14). ° a gathering of ° the clouds of the skies.

13 (15). ° Brightness from his presence
passed forth °,

14 (16). Yahweh thundered ° from ° the
heavens,

15 (17). He sent forth ° arrows ° and
scattered them,

16 (18). The stream-beds of the ° sea °
were disclosed,
Because of thine anger, Yahweh,

17 (19). He sent from on high, and took
me,

18 (20). He delivered me ° from my fierce
foes, °

19 (21). They overcame me in the day of
my distress,

20 (22). He brought me forth into a wide
place,

21 (23). Yahweh rewarded me according
to my righteousness,

22 (24). For I kept the ways of Yahweh,
and sinned not against my God ;

23 (25). For all his judgements were before
me,

24 (26). Yea, I was perfect with him,

25 (27). And Yahweh rewarded me accord-
ing to my righteousness,

26 (28). With the merciful thou art
merciful,

27 (29). With the pure thou art pure,

28 (30). ° An afflicted people thou savest,

29 (31). For thou art my lamp, Yahweh,

30 (32). For with thee ° I will shatter a
wall, °

31 (33). O God,—perfect is his way ;
a shield ° to all that trust in him.

32 (34). For who is ° God ° save Yahweh,
and who is a Rock but our God ?

33 (35). The God that girdeth me with
strength,

34 (36). He maketh my feet like hinds'
feet,

35 (37). He teacheth my hands to war,

36 (38). Thou gavest me the shield of ° my
safety, °

37 (39). Thou enlargest my footsteps
under me,

38 (40). I pursued mine enemies, and over-
took them,

39 (41). I shattered them so that they
could not rise,

40 (42). Thou didst gird me with strength
for the battle,

41 (43). Yea, mine enemies turned the
back to me,

42 (44). They cried out, but there was no
helper,

43 (45). I crushed them like the dust of
° the earth °,

44 (46). Thou didst save me from the
strivings of ° the people °,

45 (47). Thou didst set me at the head of the
nations,

46 (48). and fire from his mouth devoured,
and fire from his mouth devoured,

47 (49). and darkness was under his feet ;
he swept onwards on the wings of the
wind ;

48 (50). his tabernacle round about him,
clouds of the skies.

49 (51). hailstones and coals of fire ;

50 (52). yea, the Most High uttered his voice ° ;
° he shot forth lightning ° and dis-
comfited them ;
and the foundations of the earth were
revealed,
at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils,

51 (53). he drew me out of mighty waters,
and from them that hated me, for they
were too strong for me.

52 (54). but Yahweh became my support ;

53 (55). he delivered me, for he delighted in me.
he recompensed me according to the
cleanness of mine hands ;
and sinned not against my God ;

54 (56). and I put not his statutes from me ;
and kept me from mine iniquity ;
according to the cleanness of mine
hands ° before him °.

55 (57). with the perfect ° thou art perfect ;
and with the perverse thou art tortuous.
but haughty eyes thou humblest.
my God that lighteneth my darkness.
and with my God I will leap o'er a
fence.

56 (58). the word of Yahweh is pure,
trust in him.

57 (59). and who is a Rock but our God ?

58 (60). and maketh my way perfect ;

59 (61). and setteth me up on ° the heights ° ;
° and placeth ° ° a bow ° ° in mine
arms. °

60 (62). and ° thy encouragement °
° strengtheneth me ° ° ever °.

61 (63). so that my ankle-bones do not give way.

62 (64). and turned not till they were consumed ;

63 (65). they fell underneath my feet.
thou didst bow down beneath me those
that rose up against me.

64 (66). and as for them that hated me, ° thou
didst destroy them °.

65 (67). ° unto ° Yahweh, but he answered them
not ;
like the mire of the streets ° did I
stamp on them °.

66 (68). thou didst set me at the head of the
nations,

- a people that I knew not served me,
 44 (46). When they heard me they obeyed me the sons of strangers cringed before me.
 45 (47). The sons of strangers fainted away, they came trembling out of their strongholds.
 46 (48). Yahweh liveth, and blessed be my Rock, and exalted be the God that helpeth me;
 47 (49). The God that granteth me vengeance, ° and subdueth ° the peoples under me,
 48 (50). Who delivereth me from mine angry enemies, and lifteth me from them that rise up against me,
 49 (51). Therefore will I laud thee among the nations, and saveth me from violent men.
 50 (52). Who maketh great the deliverance of his king, Yahweh, to thy name will I sing praise, and sheweth lovingkindness to his anointed,
 to David and to his seed for evermore.

Text-critical Notes

2. Om. מִשְׁנֵבִי to avoid the repetition; also for the rhythm's sake. Om. מִשְׁנֵבִי for the rhythm's sake. 4. Read, as in 2 Sam., מִשְׁנֵבִי for חֲבָלִי, which occurs in the next verse. 6. Om., as in 2 Sam., לִפְנֵי. 11. Read, as in 2 Sam., הַשֶּׁמֶת for הַשֶּׁכֶּת, "darkness of"; om. מִיָּם. 12. Read, with Gressmann, quoted by Gunkel: מִגְּלוֹת קָדְדוֹ עָבְרוּ עָבְרוּ for נִגְלוֹת מִגְּדוֹ עָבְרוּ, "at the brightness before him clouds passed over". 13. Read מִיָּם for ב, "in", as in 2 Sam. Om., with G, as in 2 Sam., בָּרָד וְגַחְלֵי-אֵשׁ, "hailstones and coals of fire". 14. Read, with G, as in 2 Sam., חֲצֵיוֹ for חֲצֵיוֹ, "his arrows". Read בָּרָק for וַיִּבְרַק בָּרָק, cp. 2 Sam., and G for וַיִּבְרַקוּ רָב, "and lightnings great". 15. Read, as in 2 Sam., מִיָּם for מִיָּם, "waters". 17. Read, with the Versions, מִיָּבֵי הָעֵינַי, "from my fierce foe". 24. Read לִנְגִדוֹ for לִנְגִדוֹ, "before his eyes", for the rhythm's sake. 25. Om. גִּבּוֹר "man", for the rhythm's sake. 27. Read, as in 2 Sam., כִּי-יִתְּנָהּ לְאֵת, "for thou". 28. Om., as in 2 Sam., תִּהְיֶה, "thou dost light". 29. Read אֶרֶץ גִּדְרִי for אֶרֶץ גִּדְרִי, "I will run upon a troop". 30. Om. הֵוא, "(is) he", for the rhythm's sake. 31. Read, as in 2 Sam., אֶלְוֵי אֵל, "my heights". 33. Read בְּמוֹתַי for בְּמוֹתַי, "my heights". 34. Read וַתִּבְרַח for וַתִּבְרַח, "and it bendeth". Om. חֲדָשָׁה, "brass", for the rhythm's sake. Read בְּיָדֵי for בְּיָדֵי, "thy safety". Read, as in 2 Sam., עֲנִיתִי, lit. "thy answering", for עֲנִיתִי, "thy humbleness". Om., as in 2 Sam., וּמִיִּנְיָהּ הִסְעִדֵנִי, "and thy right-hand supporteth me". Read, with Gunkel, תִּרְבֵּנִי for תִּרְבֵּנִי, "thou dost increase me". Add, with G, לְנַצֵּחַ. 40. Read, with GV, אֶפְרָיִם, "I destroy them". 41. Read, as in 2 Sam., אֶל for אֶל, "upon". 42. Read, as in 2 Sam., אֶרֶץ for עַל-פְּנֵי, "upon the face of the wind". Read, as in 2 Sam., אֶרְקָעֵם for אֶרְקָעֵם, "I emptied them out". 43. Read עָבְרוּ for עָבְרוּ, "a people". 44. Read, with GS, וַיִּכְחָשׁוּ for וַיִּכְחָשׁוּ, "they deceived". 47. Read, as in 2 Sam., וַיִּנְדְּבוּ for וַיִּנְדְּבוּ, "and putteth to flight" (?).

For the title see p. 14.

1-3. In his gratitude for deliverance from grave dangers, detailed later, the psalmist begins with a heartfelt acknowledgement to Yahweh for his love and protection. Some commentators regard the opening words, *I love thee, Yahweh, my strength*, as a later addition; it is true that the word for "love" here used is late Hebrew, and is never used in reference to God; but in Ps. 116¹, where this line is quoted, the

corresponding word is often used of man's love to God, and may well have stood here originally. Gunkel and others suggest that it is a corruption, and should be read, "I exalt thee", as in Pss. 30¹, 145¹, and there is something to be said for this; in any case, these opening words are wholly appropriate, and the more striking for being an independent half-line, and thus in the nature of a key-note to the psalm, for the might and power of Yahweh resound again and again. The reiterated figures of speech expressing Yahweh's strength as *deliverer* and protector reveal the intensity of the psalmist's feelings. The expression the *horn of my safety* does not occur elsewhere; it means that the psalmist's safety is set on high, and therefore out of harm's way. So, in exultation, he cries: *Worthy to be praised is he; I called upon Yahweh, and from mine enemies I have been delivered.* 4, 5. In highly coloured, figurative language the psalmist then describes how near he had come to death; he uses four phrases all expressing ancient thought of how death was envisaged: *the waves of death* (cp. Ps. 42⁷) and *the floods of destruction*, reflect the old-world idea of the all-devouring waters of the great deep; *destruction* here is lit. "Belial", used in this sense in Ps. 41⁸, Nah. 1¹¹, 2¹; *the cords of Sheol*, and *the snares of death* present a different picture in which death, synonymous with *Sheol*, is personified, and thought of as setting a trap and ensnaring men. 6. In this perilous danger of death the psalmist had *called upon Yahweh*, who *from his sanctuary heard his cry*; the word for "sanctuary" used here is *hēkal*, and refers mostly to the earthly temple; but in Ps. 11⁴, Isa. 61, 29⁹, 63¹⁵, Mic. 1², Hab. 2²⁰ it is used of the heavenly temple; this may well be its meaning here, in which case the description of the theophany follows appropriately (see v. 9). This description (7-15) is held by some commentators to be a later insertion; an unnecessary assumption, for the psalmist's purpose is to set forth the stupendous power of Yahweh, and he utilizes ancient material with great effect. The details are gathered together from various sources, and one must recognize the skill with which they have been woven together into a consistent whole. The advent of Yahweh causes the very earth to *shake* and *tremble* for fear; for he comes in *wrath* against those enemies (v. 3) on account of whom the psalmist had appealed to him. His wrath burns, realistically described: *Smoke went up from his nostrils, and fire from his mouth devoured*, so that everything he approached caught fire: *coals kindled because of him*. It is in response to his servant's call to him in his sanctuary (v. 6) that (9) *He bowed the heavens and descended to the earth*; in contrast to the blazing light of fire before him, all is dark beneath, *darkness was under his feet*; 10, and he swoops down, riding *upon a cherub*; the word is used collectively, they were the guardians of the divine throne (cp. Ezek. 1²⁶); here, they are thought of as synonymous with *the wings of the wind* (cp.

Ps. 104^{3,4}). 11. But the majestic and terrible figure of Yahweh remains shrouded within *a gathering of the clouds of the skies* (cp. Ps. 97²), for it would be fatal for mortals to behold him (cp. Exod. 33²⁰), therefore *he made darkness his hiding-place, his tabernacle round about him*. 12. But the *brightness* within the clouds, emanating *from his presence*, is so dazzling that it raises a whirlwind of *hailstones and coals of fire*. 13. Then came the terrific sound of the rumbling and crashing of the divine voice: *Yahweh thundered from the heavens, yea, the Most High uttered his voice* (cp. Ps. 29³⁻⁹); and his enemies (14) *scattered* by his *arrows*, i.e., the lightning (cp. Ps. 77^{17,18}), are *discomfited* (cp. Ps. 144⁶). 15. Then, once again, there is a cataclysm of Nature, terrified at Yahweh's *anger: the stream-beds of the sea were disclosed, and the foundations of the earth were revealed*. 16-19. Thus did Yahweh come *from on high* to the help of his servant, and *drew him out of mighty waters*, figurative for his enemies, and *delivered him from those fierce foes*, who without the help of Yahweh were *too strong* for him. They had, indeed, actually overcome him, but Yahweh brought him into a place of safety, *a wide place*, and *delivered him, for he delighted in him*. Thus, the psalmist, in order to express the intensity of his feelings, gathers together these ancient and awe-inspiring pictures, and applies them to his own experiences of peril, and his deliverance from them. 20-24. He then makes the assertion that *Yahweh rewarded him thus according to his righteousness*; he sets forth the integrity of his character in somewhat overstated terms, ending with the claim that he was *perfect* with Yahweh, i.e., complete in all that Yahweh required of him; and he repeats that it was for this reason that Yahweh rewarded him. The Deuteronomic expressions occurring in these verses show that they have been worked over by a later editor. In 25, 26 the attitude of Yahweh towards men, according to their variable qualities, which the psalmist describes, witnesses to an undeveloped conception of God, and marks these verses as ancient. With 27 a new subject is momentarily taken up; the thought of his people comes into the mind of the psalmist; they had been *afflicted*, but Yahweh had saved them, and had *humbled the haughty eyes* of their enemy. And now (28, 29) he speaks again of his own experience of Yahweh's loving care for him: *For thou art my lamp, Yahweh, my God that lighteneth my darkness*, a similar figure of deliverance from perplexing danger occurs in Job 29³, cp. Ps. 132¹⁷; on this verse is based the evening collect in the Prayer Book, "Lighten our darkness . . ." The quaint thought of Yahweh helping to *shatter a wall* and to *leap o'er a fence*, or rampart, is possibly a reminiscence of David's escape from Keilah (1 Sam. 23^{12,13}). In what follows (29-36) there is much that betrays a *naïve* and old-world conception of Yahweh, interspersed with more exalted thoughts, which again points to the fact that this ancient poem has been worked over in later days.

The main theme is that Yahweh has helped his anointed, as the sequel shows him to have been; the psalmist, therefore, proceeds (37-48) to give a description of how he overcame his enemies, and gained a complete victory. There is nothing in these verses which calls for special comment; they seem to recall episodes in the life of David whose constant wars were an outstanding element during his reign. 49-50. These last two verses show that it is a king who is the speaker, or a court-poet in his name, in the whole of the psalm; he concludes by declaring that, in gratitude for all that Yahweh has done for him in overcoming his enemies, he will *laud* him *among the nations*, for it is Yahweh *who maketh great the deliverance of his king, and showeth loving-kindness to his anointed, to David and to his seed for evermore.*

Religious Teaching

This psalm illustrates a great religious truth in a way which is unparalleled in the Psalter. We mean the truth that God spoke in old time "by divers portions and in divers manners," as it is expressed in Hebr. 1¹; in other words, that the self-revelation of God to man is granted only in accordance with man's capacity of apprehension; and that, therefore, revelation is a gradually progressive process. The psalm presents us, on the one hand, with a conception of God which is very undeveloped, though it does exhibit a striving towards envisaging the Deity in the greatness of his power. On the other hand, there gleams through the darker shades of the picture a conception of God as taught by the inspired prophets, his justice, his purity, his mercy, and his unity. That these wholly incompatible ideas of God should appear, as it were, side by side, shows how the psalmist, all unconsciously, was placing on record, and illustrating, the great truth that divine revelation is progressive; and that God, in his mercy, does not ask of man more than man, with his limited mental and spiritual capacities, can give. From this point of view the psalm is one of the most helpful in the Psalter.

PSALM 19

THE very different subject-matter comprised in verses 1-6 and 7-10, respectively, justifies the contention that we have here two originally independent psalms. As will be seen from the quotations given in the exegetical notes, the *former* of these is an adaptation of Babylonian mythological elements. Skilfully and finely as the poet has constructed his little poem, it must nevertheless be recognized that it

comes strangely from the pen of a Hebrew writer. Doubtless at the back of his mind the thought of Yahweh as the Creator was present; but he never mentions the name of the God of Israel; his use of *El* in the opening words of the poem could refer to any god. In view of this, the action of some later psalmist in attaching to it something which was more in the spirit of Hebrew psalmody is fully comprehensible. His seven-fold repetition of the name of Yahweh (including its mention in the final verse) is significant. This second psalm, *vv.* 7-10, takes the form of a hymn in praise of the Law of Yahweh. In its whole-hearted recognition of, and gratitude for, the divine gift, it is far more edifying than the poem, pagan in form if not in spirit, that precedes it.

The dates of these two compositions are, of course, different; the former is certainly pre-exilic; the few Aramaisms which it contains do not necessarily point to a late date. The second psalm is seen by its content to have been written after the time of Ezra, during the fourth, or even the third, century B.C.

The metre differs in each case; in the former it is mostly 2 : 2, with 3 : 3 in *vv.* 4 and 6. In the latter it is uniformly 3 : 2, but in the concluding verse, which, as often in the psalms, differs from the rest, it is 3 : 3 : 3.

1. *For the Precentor : A Psalm. David's.*

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 1 (2). | The heavens declare
the glory of God,
and the work of his hands
doth the firmament proclaim. |
| 2 (3). | Day unto day
poureth forth speech,
and night unto night
showeth forth wisdom ; |
| 3 (4). | Neither speech nor words,
not heard is their voice ; |
| 4 (5). | In all the earth ° goeth forth ° and to the end of ° the world their °
° their voice °, utterances. |
| 5 (6). | For the sun is set
a tabernacle ° in the sea ° ;
and he, like a bridegroom,
cometh forth from his chamber ;
he rejoiceth like a champion
to run his course ; |
| 6 (7). | From the end of the heavens is his
going forth, and his circuit ° unto ° their end,
and nought is hid from his heat. |
| * * * * * | |
| 7 (8). | The law of Yahweh is perfect, refreshing the soul ;
The testimony of Yahweh is
trustworthy, making wise the simple ; |
| 8 (9). | The precepts of Yahweh are up-
right, rejoicing the heart ;
The commandment of Yahweh is
pure, enlightening the eyes ; |
| 9 (10). | ° The word of ° Yahweh is pure, standing fast for ever ;
The judgements of Yahweh are
Truth, they are altogether righteous, |
| 10 (11). | They are preferable to gold, yea, to much fine gold,
Yea, sweeter than honey, and the dripping from the honey-comb. |

- 11 (12). Thy servant also is instructed by them,
 12 (13). Errors,—who discerneth them ?
 13 (14). Also from purposeful sins keep thy servant,
 Then shall I be perfect and innocent
 14 (15). Let the words of my mouth be acceptable,
 Yahweh, my Rock and my Redeemer.
- in observing them is great reward;
 from un-intended sins keep me innocent;
 let them not master me,
 of great transgression.
 and the meditation of my heart, before thee,

Text-critical Notes

4. Read לֹא־יָצָא for לֹא־יָצָא , "hath gone forth". Read וְלִקְצֹתָ for וְלִקְצֹתָ , "and in the end of". Read בְּיָמָם for בְּיָמָם , "in them". 6. Read עַל־ for עַל־ , "on". 9. Read אֶת־יְרֵאָה , cp. Ps. 119³⁸, for יְרֵאָה , "the fear of".

1. The psalm opens abruptly with a statement of fact; a certain number of psalms begin in this way, but it is exceptional; usually a psalm opens with words addressed to the Almighty, or in reference to him. The mention of *God* in this verse is not in reference to the God of Israel, though doubtless so interpreted in later days; but in its origin it was, as *vs.* 5, 6 show, in reference to the Sun-god. The verbs *declare* and *proclaim* are, in Hebrew, invariably used in the literal sense of utterance; that this is not the sense, however, in which they are here used is obvious. The psalmist is expressing some such thoughts as occur, for example, in the following Babylonian hymn to the Sun-god, Shamash:

<p>" O Shamash, on the horizon of the heavens The bolt of the glorious heavens The gates of the heavens O Shamash, thine head hast thou raised O Shamash, the glory of the heavens, Light hast thou granted Life's course on the earth All creatures that live O Shamash, like a father and a mother</p>	<p>hast thou risen ablaze, hast thou unlocked, hast thou opened ! o'er the land ; thou coverest the lands ; to the face of the land ! dost thou guide, thou dost quicken ; thou showest care." ¹</p>
--	---

2. In a similar metaphor the psalmist continues: *Day unto day poureth forth speech, i.e.,* each day, as the sun rises, has its message to give of the god's glory; *and night unto night showeth forth wisdom, i.e.,* the god's wise forethought in providing rest for the creation is shown forth night by night. 3. No sound is heard; yet their palpable eloquence is apprehended throughout the world. So far the psalmist has merely implied, though plainly enough, that the thought of the Sun-god was in his mind; now he directly asserts this: 4. *For the sun is set a tabernacle in the sea*; the emendation "in the sea", for the meaningless "in them", is too obvious to need discussion. The idea that a tabernacle, or tent, is set up in the sea for the sun, is ancient and naïve (though paralleled by the modern expression of the sun sinking in the

¹ Gressmann, *Altorientalische Texte zum alten Testament*, p. 243 (1926).

west !); representations of Shamash in his "tabernacle" occur on ancient seals (see, for illustrations of this, Gressmann, *op. cit.* i, nos. 101, 102). 5. The daily rising of the sun is then compared with a *bridegroom* coming forth *from his chamber*; who *rejoiceth like a champion to run his course*; and here again Babylonian conceptions regarding the Sun-god are echoed; in a prayer to him, one of many that have come down to us, mention is made of his bride, Ai, and he is spoken of as a hero, or champion: "O warrior, champion, Shamash, and thou, Ai, the bride, look ever favourably upon my pious deeds . . ." ¹ So, too, in the concluding lines, the words: *From the end of the heavens is his going forth, and his circuit unto their end, and nought is hid from his heat*, we have a thought reminiscent of another Babylonian prayer to the Sun-god, in which it is said:

"The mighty mountains hath thine awesome glance covered,
Thy light hath filled the expanse of the lands;
Thou regardest the hills, beholdest the earth . . .
O'er the wide earth is thy daily course,
O'er sea and ocean, o'er hills, o'er earth and heaven. . . ." ²

That the Hebrew poet utilized Babylonian material in composing his poem is thus abundantly clear. For a poem of this character to have been included among the Hebrew psalms may, indeed, cause surprise, even though adapted, and made to apply to Yahweh; and we can fully understand why a later psalmist felt impelled to counteract its distasteful pagan atmosphere, as it was to him, by adding a psalm more in accordance with the Hebrew conception of praise. This brings us to *vv.* 7-14. The first point to note here is the significant seven-fold utterance of the name of Yahweh; in protest, as it were, to its omission in the other poem. 7-10. The absence of parallelism in most of the psalm will be noticed; this is exceptional, but does not interfere with its beauty. It is a finely constructed series of utterances in praise of the Law, all the terms used being different aspects of the Law. The manifest delight which the psalmist has in the Law shows that there was nothing burdensome in observing it; in later days, owing to Pharisaism, it was different, and became a "yoke" (cp. Gal. 1⁵); but in the time of the psalmist the observance of the Law was a source of happiness. The meaning of these verses is clear and straightforward, comments are therefore not called for. 11-14. The psalmist then applies what he has said about the Law to himself personally. He has learned by experience that in observing the Law *great reward* accrues: a clear conscience and the certitude of living according to the divine will. Then, with the sensitiveness of a truly religious man, he recognizes that no one is wholly free from sin; there are *un-intended sins*, and he prays that he

¹ Jastrow, *Die Religion Babylonien und Assyrien*, i. p. 400 (1905).

² Gressmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 244 f.

may be kept innocent from these. He knows, too, the weakness of human nature, and prays that he may not give way to temptation : *from purposeful sins keep thy servant, let them not master me* ; then, with divine help, he will at least be *innocent of great transgression*. And he concludes with the prayer that in word and thought he may be right in the sight of God. These final verses are of deep import for personal religion.

Religious Teaching

This has been dealt with in the exeg. notes.

PSALM 20

THIS psalm is unique in the Psalter. It is in the nature of a prayer for victory, uttered on the eve of battle, after sacrifices have been offered ; the scene presented is, therefore, in the temple. Confidence in the favourable outcome of the impending conflict is expressed, for all has been committed to the hands of Yahweh in whose might implicit trust is placed. This ceremony was customary in Israel from early times ; it is implied in Judg. 4¹⁴, 5¹¹, and directly described in 1 Sam. 7⁹, 13⁹, cp. 1 Kgs. 8⁴⁴, 45 ; the rite was common to all peoples of antiquity. The prayer is offered by the priest on behalf of the king. Thus encouraged and fortified, the king expresses his conviction that in answer to the prayer the victory will be his. The psalm closes with another short petition, uttered by the assembled worshippers, that Yahweh will answer the prayer which has been offered. The mention of the king is an obvious indication that the psalm is pre-exilic ; he is the ruler of the southern kingdom (v. 2) ; but otherwise there is nothing in the psalm which helps in fixing a more exact date.

The metre is mostly 3 : 3, with occasional two-beat half-lines.

1. *For the Precentor : A Psalm. David's.*

- | | | |
|--------|---|--|
| 1 (2). | May Yahweh answer thee
in the day of trouble,
may the name of the God
of Jacob ° defend thee ° ; | |
| 2 (3). | May he send thee help from his
sanctuary, | and from Zion uphold thee. |
| 3 (4). | May he remember all thine offerings, | and ° have respect unto ° ° thy whole
burnt sacrifices ° ; Selah. |
| 4 (5). | May he grant thee ° thy heart's
desire °, | and fulfil all thy purpose. |
| 5 (6). | We will shout for joy at thy victory, | and in the name of our God ° will we
delight °. |
| | May Yahweh fulfil all thy requests. | |
| 6 (7). | Now ° I know of a certainty ° | that Yahweh giveth victory to his
anointed ; |
| | He will answer him from his holy
heavens, | with the mighty acts of his right-hand
will he help him. |

- 7 (8). These in chariots
 and those in horses,
 but we in the name of °
 our God, ° are strong °;
8 (9). They stumble and fall, but we rise up and stand firm.
9 (10). O Yahweh, save the king, ° and answer us ° in the day we call.

Text-critical Notes

1. Lit. "set thee up on high". 3. Read, with Ehrlich, יִרְשָׁנָה, lit. "seek favourably", (for this use of the word see Deut. 11¹²) for יִרְשָׁנָה, "make fat". Read, with some MSS. and ST, עוֹלָהֶיךָ for the sing. 4. Lit. "according to thy heart". 5. Read, with Cheyne, נָגִיל for נִדְבָל, "we will set up our banners"; the parallelism is demanded. 6. Read, with Budde, יִדְוֹץ יִדְעָתִי, as required for the rhythm. 7. Om., with some G MSS., יִחְיֶה. Read, G MSS. S, נִזְכִּיר (cp. Ps. 12⁴) for נִזְכִּיר, "we will cause to remember". 9. Read, with the Versions, נֶעֱנֶה for נֶעֱנֶה, "he will answer us".

1-4. The prayer with which the psalm opens is spoken by the priest, and supplements that which had already been uttered by the king: *May Yahweh answer thee in the day of trouble*; the sequel shows that "thee" has reference to the king, and "the day of trouble" refers to the impending battle. Faith in *the name of the God of Jacob* will defend him, cp. Ps. 46^{7, 11}, 54³ and elsewhere. This *help* will be sent *from his sanctuary*, i.e., the temple on mount Zion, conceived of as Yahweh's dwelling-place when among his people; the king in question ruled, therefore, over the southern kingdom of Judah. It is further pleaded that *Yahweh may remember all thine offerings, and have respect unto*, i.e., take note of, *thy whole burnt sacrifices*; the types of sacrifices here spoken of are the *minhah* and the *'olah*; the former was a general term for any kind of offering, as here, but in post-exilic times it was restricted to the meal-offering; the *'olah* was the common designation for a burnt-offering, burned on the altar in its entirety. It will be noted how the ancient belief in the acceptability of sacrifices by Yahweh appears here. Finally, the priest prays that God will grant the king his *heart's desire*, i.e., victory, and *fulfil all his purpose*, i.e., prosper all his plans for the coming battle. 5. At this point the assembled worshippers burst out in joyful strain and express their confidence in the victory of the king: *We will shout for joy at thy victory* (lit. "salvation," but cp. e.g., 1 Sam. 14⁴⁵), and *in the name of our God will we delight*, a confidence which is further emphasized in the words: *May Yahweh fulfil all thy requests*. 6-8. And now the king himself speaks; all has been done which duty to God demands: prayer, sacrifice, and the expression of earnest trust in him, so that he can confidently affirm: *Now I know of a certainty that Yahweh giveth victory to his anointed* (cp. Ps. 2²). But the king speaks of the divine answer as coming *from his holy heavens*, not from Zion, as in v. 2; there is, of course, no contradiction here; sometimes Yahweh is thought of as present in the

sanctuary, at others as dwelling in the heavens. For the phrase *the mighty acts of his right-hand*, cp. Ps. 106^a. The king then, speaking both in his own name and in that of his warriors, contrasts the vain trust *in chariots* and *in horses* on which the enemy relies, with those who *are strong* by virtue of *the name of our God*; in the one case, *they stumble and fall*, but he and those who follow him in the strength of God, *rise up and stand firm*. 9. The ceremony closes with a final petition uttered by the whole body of worshippers : *O Yahweh, save the king, and answer us in the day we call*. "In the day" means here : at the present time. The verse makes a most fitting and appropriate conclusion ; it is difficult to understand why some commentators regard it as a later addition.

Religious Teaching

The old-world belief that God directs the issue of battles, together with that of the acceptability of sacrifices, find natural expression in such an ancient psalm as this. Nevertheless, the ardent faith expressed must be recognized. But otherwise the religious teaching belongs to a distant age.

PSALM 21

IN this psalm, one of the "royal" psalms, there occurs what, at first sight, seems to present an incongruity. Verses 1-6 contain a thanksgiving that the prayer, offered no doubt during the sacrifice which has preceded it (cp. Ps. 20), has been answered ; but vv. 8-12 contain wishes that the king may be victorious over his enemies, showing that the victory has not yet been gained. How, then, can vv. 1-6 be a thanksgiving for victory ? This apparent incongruity is such only at first sight. We have here an illustration of one of the finest elements in Israelite religion, namely, faith in the efficacy of prayer so deep and living that the certitude of prayer being answered is expressed by the affirmation that it *is* already answered. It is worth pointing out here that this religious element appears in some of the prayers of the Synagogue Liturgy. As is well known, in a certain number of instances these prayers go back in their origin to pre-Christian times ; and even among those of later date, there is no reason to doubt that the spirit and essence of ancient prayers has often been preserved. An illustration of faith in the efficacy of prayer, such as has been referred to, may be offered. One of these prayers concludes thus : "Blessed art thou, Yahweh, our God, our Father, our King, who art good, and dealest kindly with all ; thou hast dealt kindly, dost deal kindly, and wilt deal kindly with us ; thou hast bestowed, thou dost bestow, thou wilt ever bestow upon

us grace, lovingkindness, and mercy." In this connexion it is impossible not to recall the words of our Lord: "Therefore I say unto you, All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them" (Mk. 11²⁴). This, then, we submit, is the way in which this psalm is to be understood; faith in the efficacy of prayer envisages it as answered before its actual fulfilment.

The psalm is pre-exilic, but it is not possible to say who the king in question was.

The metre of the first part of the psalm is almost uniformly 2 : 2, that of the latter part 3 : 3.

1. *For the Precentor : A Psalm. David's.*

- 1 (2). Yahweh, in thy strength
doth the king rejoice,
and because of thy help
° he is full of joy ;
- 2 (3). the desire of his heart
hast thou granted him,
and the request of his lips
thou hast not denied ; Selah.
- 3 (4). Yea, thou didst meet him beforehand
° with choice benefits °,
thou didst place on his head
a crown of gold !
- 4 (5). Life he asked °,
thou gavest it him,
length of days
for ever and ever !
- 5 (6). Great is his glory
because of thy help,
honour and majesty
hast thou laid on him ;
- 6 (7). Yea, thou dost ° grant ° him
blessings for ever,
Thou makest him glad with the joy of thy presence.
- 7 (8). For the king trusteth in Yahweh, and, with the love of the Most High, he
will not be moved.
- 8 (9). May thine hand light upon all thine enemies, may thy right-hand ° shatter ° all them
that hate thee ;
- 9 (10). Mayest thou make them like a furnace of fire, in the time of thy wrath ° ° mayest
thou destroy them °,
and may the fire consume them ;
- 10 (11). Mayest thou destroy their ° off-
spring ° from the earth, and their seed from the sons of men.
- 11 (12). For they ° purposed ° evil against
thee, they imagined a device,—° in vain ° ;
- 12 (13). For thou makest them (turn) the
° back °, ° thy bow-strings thou preparest
against the face of them.
- 13 (14). Arise, Yahweh, in thy might, we will sing, and praise thy power.

Text-critical Notes

1. Om., with the Versions, מַה, "how", for the rhythm's sake. 3. Lit. "with blessings of goodness". 4. Om. הַיָּמִין, "of thee", for the rhythm's sake. 6. Lit. "appoint". 8. Read, with Kittel, הַיְּמִינִי to avoid the repetition of הַיְּמִינִי. 9. Om. הַיְּמִינִי יְהוָה, "thy presence, Yahweh". Read הַיְּמִינִי לְעֵצָה for בְּלֵעַ, "may he destroy them"; for בְּלֵעַ in this sense see 2 Sam. 20^{19, 20}. 10. Lit. "fruit". 11. Lit. "spread out", cp. Judg. 4¹¹. Lit. "they were not able". 12. Lit. "shoulder". Om. ב "with".

1-6. With unflinching faith the conviction is expressed that the prayer which has been offered will be answered; indeed, so rooted is the certitude that Yahweh will grant what has been pleaded for, that the petition is regarded as fulfilled. It has been pointed out above that this is an element in some of the prayers of the Jewish Liturgy, and there is no reason to doubt its existence in earlier days. Both the spirit and wording of many synagogal prayers echo far earlier usage. This explains what at first sounds strange in this psalm, namely that the answer to prayer is recorded before the prayer has been fulfilled. It is difficult to determine by whom the different parts of the psalm were uttered, or rather sung; but in view of the words in the concluding verse, "we will sing and praise thy power," it would seem that, with the exception of v. 7, the whole psalm was sung by the temple choir. The note of joy is first struck because of the king's faith in the *strength* of Yahweh; for in that faith the king knows that his prayer, *the desire of his heart*, is *granted*, and *the request of his lips not denied*. This faith is the stronger in that already Yahweh had granted *choice benefits* before they were asked for; *thou didst meet him beforehand*, a difficult word in Hebrew to render adequately; perhaps it is best expressed by the word "prevent," as used in the Prayer Book collect: "Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings with thy most gracious favour." In the present case it was the *crown of gold*, conceived of as having been *placed on the king's head* by Yahweh at his coronation. Further, he had prayed for a long *life* and this had been granted; in the Oriental mode of speech, *For ever and ever*; not, of course, to be taken literally, cp. 1 Kgs. 1³¹, Dan. 2⁴, 3⁹, etc. And because of Yahweh's *help* the king enjoyed *great glory*; for *honour and majesty* had Yahweh *laid on him*; but most blessed of all was the happiness granted to him by *the joy of Yahweh's presence*, i.e., by the sanctified happiness experienced through the conviction of God's nearness to him. There follows now (7) what seems to be a link joining together the two parts of the psalm. The first part, the thanksgiving, has been addressed to Yahweh; the second part records the good wishes of the worshippers present, and is addressed to the king. Between the two parts come the words, sung by a single voice, affirming the faith of the king: *The king trusteth in Yahweh*, and expressing the conviction that, shielded by the love of the Most High, he will not be moved. And now (8-13) the whole temple-choir sings again, recording the wish that the king may wholly overcome all his enemies: *May thine hand light upon all thine enemies*; more is implied by the expression "light upon" than the rendering would seem to indicate; it means lit. "find"; for the sense in which it is here used, i.e., "crush" or "annihilate", cp. Isa. 10^{10, 14}; the same word is repeated in the second half of the verse, and as such repetition is against Hebrew poetical usage, it is evidently a case of dittography;

the emendation adopted "shatter" (root MHZ) occurs fairly frequently in reference to the total overthrow of enemies (*e.g.*, Num. 24⁸, Ps. 18³⁸). The next verse (9) is difficult; the text has clearly undergone some corruption, the general sense shows that the name of Yahweh has got in by mistake, for the whole section is in reference to the king; the words, *Mayest thou make them like a furnace of fire*, taken in conjunction with the parallel in the second half of the verse, are probably intended to be a picture of destruction which is to be the lot of the enemies; but it must be confessed that the state of the text makes any interpretation uncertain. With the cruel thought of the extermination of *offspring* and *seed*, cp. Josh. 6²¹. This is to be the vengeance on the enemies for their evil designs. Finally, Yahweh is called upon to consummate the victory so that the people may *sing, and praise his power*.

Religious Teaching

See intr. section.

PSALM 22

THIS psalm is one of those which record the antagonism between the orthodox section of the people, who continued faithful to the religion and worship of their forefathers, and those who, dominated largely by extraneous influences, were anti-traditionalist, and lax, both in regard to belief and practice, in their attitude towards the religion that had been handed down (see further on this, pp. 56 ff.). As so many of the psalms in which this struggle is reflected show, the behaviour of the anti-traditionalists must at times have been as cruel as it was unscrupulous. Our psalmist would appear to have been one of the leaders of the orthodox party judging from the numbers and characters of those opposed to him; and they had evidently gained some notable, if temporary, success; ultimately, however, he regained his position of influence among the true worshippers of Yahweh. This seems to be the general state of affairs as presented by the psalm.

The alternating outbursts of plaint and praise realistically reflect the conflicting emotions of the psalmist. Unlike some other psalms of a similar character, nothing is said about sin being the cause of the sufferer's troubles, though there is no vaunt of righteousness. Notable, too, is the fact that the psalmist nowhere calls for divine vengeance to be visited on his adversaries. The psalm forms a unity; to deny this is to misapprehend the mental and spiritual state of the psalmist; logical thought-sequence is not to be looked for in one who is at first

so overwhelmed with perplexity and worry, and ultimately spiritually exalted by unexpected deliverance.

In some of the verses the text has suffered corruption.

To assign a date to the psalm is difficult; but the conditions portrayed may well point to the Greek period.

The metre is very varied, reflecting doubtless the mental condition of the psalmist: short two-beat lines interspersed with those of three beats.

1. *For the Precentor: 'The Hind of the dawn.' A Psalm. David's.*

- 1 (2). My God, my God,
Why hast thou forsaken me?
Why ° art thou far ° from my cry °,
from the words of my ° clamour °?
- 2 (3). ° I cry in the day-time,
but thou answerest not,
and in the night I am not silent.
- 3 (4). But thou abidest ° in the sanctuary, ° the praise of ° Israel.
- 4 (5). In thee did our fathers trust, they trusted, and thou didst deliver them;
- 5 (6). Unto thee did they cry, and were in thee did they trust, and were not rescued, put to shame.
- 6 (7). But I am a worm, and no man,
the reproach of men,
and despised of the people.
- 7 (8). All that see me laugh me to scorn,
they shoot out the lip,
they shake the head:
- 8 (9). "He ° cast ° himself on Yahweh, let him rescue him, for he delighteth in him!"
let him deliver him,
- 9 (10). But thou art ° my strength ° from ° my trust ° while on my mother's breasts;
the womb,
- 10 (11). On thee have I been cast from the womb,
from my mother's belly
thou art my God.
- 11 (12). Be not far from me,
for trouble is nigh,
but there is no helper.
- 12 (13). Mighty bulls surround me, strong ones of Bashan encompass me;
13 (14). ° He openeth upon me his mouth °, a lion ravening and roaring.
14 (15). Like water am I poured out, my bones are all out of joint;
My heart is become like wax, melting within ° mine innermost parts °;
- 15 (16). Dried up like a potsherd is ° my throat °,
° and the dust of ° death is ° on my lips °,
and my tongue cleaveth to my palate,
- 16 (17). For ° many ° dogs surround me, the assembly of evil men gather round me,
° they bind ° my hands and my feet;
17 (18). I proclaim all ° my pains °, they gaze and look at me;
- 18 (19). They apportion my garments among them, and upon my vesture do they cast lots.
19 (20). But thou, Yahweh, be not far, my Helper, haste to mine aid;
20 (21). Rescue my soul from the sword, ° my life ° from the power of the dog;
21 (22). Save me from the mouth of the lion, and ° mine afflicted one ° from the horns of the wild-oxen.
- 22 (23). I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee;
- 23 (24). Ye that fear Yahweh, praise him, all ye seed of Jacob, glorify him,
and stand in awe of him, all ye seed of Israel;
- 24 (25). For he hath not despised, he hath not ° spurned °,
the affliction of the afflicted one;
And he hath not hidden his face and when he cried unto him he from him, hearkened.

- 25 (26). ° From him ° is my praise
in the great congregation ;
my vows will I pay
in the presence of them that fear him.
- 26 (27). The meek shall eat and be satisfied, they that seek him shall praise Yahweh,
May your heart live for ever.
- 27 (28). Let them recall it and turn, °
all the ends of the earth,
and let them worship ° before him °,
all the kindreds of the nations.
- 28 (29). For the Kingship is Yahweh's,
and ° his rule ° is over the nations.
- 29 (30). ° Of a truth, him ° shall they worship,
all that ° sleep ° in the earth,
before him shall they bow down,
all they that go down to the dust,
° and the soul that liveth not
shall glorify his power °.
- 30 (31). It shall be told ° about Yahweh °
° to a generation 31 (32) that cometh ° ;
and they shall declare his righteousness
to a people that shall be born,
that he hath done it.

Text-critical Notes

1. Read *רָחֹק* for *רָחֹק*, "distant". Read, as a better parallel, with Gunkel, *מִשְׁעָרַי* for *מִשְׁעָרַי*, "from my salvation". Lit. "roaring". 2. Om. *אֱלֹהֵי* for the rhythm's sake. 3. Read, with G, *בְּקֹדֶשׁ* for *קֹדֶשׁ*, "holy". Read, with many MSS. and the Versions, *תְּהַלֵּל* for *תְּהַלֵּל*, "the praises of". 8. Read, with the Versions, *גָּל*, lit. "rolled", for *גָּל* imperat. 9. Read, with Duhm, *גָּלֵי* for *גָּלֵי*, "that bringeth me forth". Read, with the Versions, *מִבְטָחַי* for *מִבְטָחַי*, "that causeth me to trust". 13. Read, as the sense demands, *פָּתְחוּ* for *פָּתְחוּ*, "they opened their mouth upon me". 14. Lit. "my bowels". 15. Read, with many commentators, *חֲזִקִי* for *חֲזִקִי*, "my strength", as a better parallel to "my tongue". Read, with Gunkel, *וְלַעֲפָר* for *וְלַעֲפָר*, "and to the dust of"; and *בְּשִׁפְתַי* for *בְּשִׁפְתַי*, "thou layest me". 16. Add, with GT, *לְרִבִּים* as demanded by the rhythm. Read, with some commentators, *אֶחָד* for *אֶחָד*, "like the lion". 17. Lit. "recount". Read, with G, *עֲצָמוֹתַי* for *עֲצָמוֹתַי*, "my bones". 20. Lit. "mine only one". 21. Read, cp. G, *עֲנִיתָנִי* for *עֲנִיתָנִי*, "thou hast answered me". 24. Lit. "made detestable". 25. Read *מֵאֵתֶךָ* for *מֵאֵתֶךָ*, "from thee". 27. Om., *לְפָנֶיךָ* for the rhythm's sake. Read, with the Versions, *לְפָנֶיךָ* for *לְפָנֶיךָ*, "before thee". 28. Read *מִשְׁלֹ* for *מִשְׁלֹ*, "ruling". 29. Read *לֹא* for *לֹא*, "they eat". Om. *וְשִׁמְרוּ* before *וְשִׁמְרוּ*. Read *יִשְׁנִי* for *יִשְׁנִי*, "the fat ones of". 30, 31. Read, with Gunkel, *וְנִפְשֹׁ* for *וְנִפְשֹׁ*, "and his soul he hath not preserved alive, a seed shall serve him". 30. Read *לַיהוָה* for *לַיהוָה*, "about the Lord". Read, with G, *לְדֹר וְבָא*.

For the title see p. 14.

1, 2. The mental and spiritual state of the psalmist is poignantly expressed by the words of despair with which he begins. He feels himself forsaken by God, for although he has cried *in the day-time and at night*, no answer has come. The repeated *My God, my God*, is very impressive. One or two textual emendations are offered in these verses; *my cry* in place of "my salvation" (the two words are

very similar in Hebrew, see text-crit. note) gives the proper parallel to *my clamour*, lit. "my roaring", a strong expression indicating the intensity of suffering and yearning for relief. The omission of "My God" at the beginning of v. 2 is for the sake of the rhythm. But in spite of his despair the psalmist does not lose faith; he knows that God is near (3) *in the sanctuary* (as the Septuagint reads), where he is wont to be, and where *praise* is offered to him. 4, 5. For his own comfort the psalmist recalls how in the past the *fathers trusted in* God, and were delivered; and in saying so he implicitly asks why this is not the case with him. 6, 7. But his humility and sense of unworthiness rebuke him; and he reflects upon what an object of contempt he is: *I am a worm, and no man* (for the term cp. Isa. 41¹⁴); he feels bitterly the way in which he has been treated by his opponents, reproached, despised, and laughed at; and (8) what doubtless hurt him most of all, because there seemed to be some truth in it, was that he had called upon Yahweh, but in vain, the words are those of his enemies: *He cast himself on Yahweh*, a very expressive term, lit. "he rolled" on to Yahweh, meaning whole-hearted abandonment. The words: *for he delighteth in him*, are, of course, ironical. 9-10. Then, however, the psalmist's innate faith gains the mastery; from birth he has been very close to Yahweh; he claims to have acknowledged God from the very beginning of his life: *from my mother's belly thou art my God*. 11. He therefore feels his right to claim Yahweh's help in his present straits, for apart from Yahweh, *there is no helper*. 12-13. And now the psalmist describes his foes, and the pitiable state he is in owing to their cruel enmity. As we have seen, he was a man of deep feelings, and given to use strong expressions. He speaks of his enemies as *mighty bulls*, intimating both their strength and fierceness, *strong ones of Bashan*, the broad and fertile tract of country north-east of the Jordan; here the cattle were turned loose, and became wild and ferocious. The leader of these enemies is compared with *a lion ravening and roaring* (cp. Pss. 10⁹, 17¹²), ready to tear the poor victim to pieces, *he openeth upon me his mouth*; a slight emendation is here called for; the text as it stands, "they open upon me their mouth," makes the bulls the subject, whereas it is the "lion" that is the subject. 14, 15. With a characteristic sudden change of thought, the psalmist then contemplates his own helpless state, both bodily and mental, and speaks of himself as near to death. Here again, exaggerated utterances reflect a condition of intolerable strain on the part of the sufferer. His feeling of utter helplessness he describes in an extremely graphic picture as being *poured out like water*, likening his body to water splashed on the ground and spreading aimlessly, his *bones* being *all out of joint*. Similarly with his state of mind, or *heart*, which, according to the Hebrew conception, was the seat of the emotions (cp. Ps. 25¹⁷, 73²¹); this, he says, *is*

become like wax, melting within him (cp. Deut. 20⁸, Josh. 2¹¹, Nah. 2¹⁰), a picture of helpless fear. He speaks further of his bodily suffering, perhaps in reference to burning fever: *Dried up like a potsherd is my throat*; the Hebrew text has, "my strength," but the parallel *my tongue cleaveth to my palate*, makes *my throat* more appropriate; the two words are again very similar in Hebrew, and easily confused (see text-crit. note). In this state of weakness he feels the hand of death upon him: *the dust of death is on my lips*; the Hebrew text here has: "and to the dust of death thou layest me"; but this cannot be correct, for God is not being addressed, the psalmist is describing his state; the two words, "thou layest me" and "on my lips" are almost exactly alike in Hebrew. The mention of "dust" with "lips," where death is referred to, is peculiarly appropriate; "death," as often, is synonymous with *Sheol*, the abode of the dead; the Hebrew conception of this place was the same as that of the Babylonians: it is a place of darkness where dust covers all things; dust is on bolt and bar, and dust covers the shades of men as they silently glide through the dust-laden streets of this city of the dead; their only food is dust, and their drink is black, murky water. It will thus be seen that the psalmist's words, *the dust of death is on my lips*, are very significant. The thought of death then further occupies his mind, 16-18. In likening his enemies to *dogs*, he is thinking of the scavengers that devour corpses, see 1 Kgs. 21⁴³, 2 Kgs. 9³⁶; like these, the enemies *gather round* him, and already treat him as a dead body: *they bind my hands and my feet*, according to Oriental usage (see John 11⁴⁴, "bound hand and foot with grave-bands"). The Hebrew text here reads, "Like a lion my hands and my feet," a corruption recognized by the early translators, as the Versions show; they suggest various emendations, none of which is satisfactory. A number of emendations are also proposed by modern commentators; but there can be no certainty as to the right reading. Some authorities read "they bind", the letters of which in Hebrew come near to those of "like a lion"; we have adopted this as giving the best sense. Although he cries out on account of the pain they are causing him, they simply *gaze and look at* him, regarding him as already destined to death. According to custom, the clothes of a criminal, who suffered quite naked, were the perquisite of the executioner: *They apportion my garments among them . . .*. Thus, the psalmist envisages the approach of death. But even in the hour of deepest peril he still looks for help (19-21) and calls upon Yahweh: *Rescue my soul from the sword, my life from the power of the dog*; the rendering "my life" is lit. "mine only one", meaning the psalmist's very self, and thus a synonym for "soul", as in Ps. 35¹⁷. The terms *dog* and *lion* are again applied to the enemies, and he prays that Yahweh may save *mine afflicted one from the horns of the wild-oxen*; here again an emendation is called for; the Hebrew text reads "thou hast answered me from the horns of the wild-

oxen", which is meaningless; in Hebrew the two words "thou hast answered me" and "mine afflicted one" are almost identical (see text-crit. note), and it is easy to see how the corruption arose. "Mine afflicted one" is in reference to the psalmist himself, being synonymous with "my soul" and "mine only one". The expression *the horns of the wild-oxen*, again in reference to the enemies, is descriptive of strength and ferocity; the psalmist pictures himself as entangled in the cruel onslaught of his powerful foes. Then (22-26) without any words as to how it was brought about, the psalmist indicates that he has been delivered, in consequence of which he says: *I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee*; he will, in other words, give thanks and praise to God for his deliverance. He, further, calls upon all them that *fear Yahweh*, namely, the *seed of Jacob*, and the *seed of Israel*, to join with him in glorifying and worshipping him. Significant are the echoes here of what is said in the earlier verses of the psalm; thus, when the psalmist says: *For he hath not despised, he hath not spurned*, there is an implicit reference to his humble description of himself as a "worm" (v. 6); and *the affliction of the afflicted one* is a point of attachment with v. 21; as marking the unity of the psalm this is worth mention. In gratitude the psalmist continues: *And he hath not hidden his face from him* (i.e. the afflicted one). . . . 25. The praise that he therefore offers *in the great congregation*, he recognizes to be *from him*, i.e., inspired by God. The *vows*, made in the time of peril, he will now fulfil, and thus witness to God's loving-kindness *in the presence of them that fear him*. In saying that *the meek shall eat and be satisfied*, the psalmist is referring to the sacrificial feast which takes place after the offering of the sacrifices in fulfilment of his vows, to which he invites his friends (cp. 1 Sam. 9¹⁹, 22-24); *the meek*, or "humble," is one of the technical terms applied to the *Hasidim*, the "godly ones," i.e., the faithful upholders of traditional belief and practice (see further pp. 56 ff.). He encourages his friends and followers with the words: *May your heart live for ever*, thus expressing the wish for their continued prosperity after the troublous times now past. The universalistic note then sounded (27, 28) reflects prophetic influence; it is not enough that the faithful should praise God; *all the ends of the earth* are called upon to recognize what God had done for his servant, and to *turn*, i.e., be converted; then shall *all the kindreds of the nations worship before him, for the Kingship is Yahweh's, and his rule is over the nations*, an element belonging to prophetic eschatology (cp. Isa. 62³, Obad. v. 21, Zech. 14⁹). A remarkable thought then follows (29) which adumbrates a developed belief in the After-life; the verse is a very difficult one on account of the corruption of the text, but there can be no doubt as to its general sense, namely that the departed will join in worshipping God for the manifestation of his power in delivering his

servant. As the Hebrew text stands it is impossible to make sense out of it; the emendations which we have adopted, and for which we are mainly indebted to Gunkel, are very convincing; a glance at the text-critical notes will show how closely the emended form resembles the Hebrew text, and how the corruptions arose owing to faulty transcribing. Finally (30) the psalmist declares that those now living will hand on *to a generation that cometh, to a people that shall be born*, the way in which God's *righteousness* was vindicated by the accomplishment of this wondrous deliverance and reinstatement of his servant.

From all that is recorded in this psalm, especially in *vv.* 22-30, we are justified in believing that it embodies, in outline reference, some episode in Jewish internal history which was of far-reaching importance. It tells of one of the decisive victories, gained after a severe struggle, of the orthodox party in the long drawn-out conflict between them and those whose attitude towards the traditional faith threatened to undermine the Jewish religion (on this see further pp. 56 ff.). The importance of this victory is graphically portrayed in this psalm. It is, we submit, no exaggeration to say that this victory constituted one of the decisive steps which led ultimately to the permanent establishment of Jewish orthodoxy in the supremacy of Pharisaism. Much that later Pharisaism developed was alien to Judaism at its best, yet it must in fairness be recognized that it preserved, in face of opposed tendencies, the fundamental tenets of the Jewish religion. The victory recorded in this psalm may well have been epoch-making. Our knowledge of the history of the Jews during the fourth and third centuries B.C. is unfortunately meagre, owing to the scantiness of historical records; but if, as we believe, this psalm has preserved a reminiscence of a vital victory, it is, both historically and religiously, of deep interest and importance.

Religious Teaching

The outstanding religious element contained in this psalm is its witness of one whose indomitable faith, in face of overwhelming forces, according to human standards, stood firm to the very verge of martyrdom. That he was ready to die for his religious belief is quite clear. His deliverance at the eleventh hour vindicated his trust in God. The only other point to be noted here is the psalmist's communing with God which upheld him in his direst need. No dilating on these sublime facts is required; they call for thought, not words.

The quotation of some of the verses in this psalm in the Gospels is dealt with on p. 95.

PSALM 23

THIS exquisite little psalm, probably the most familiar of all the psalms, tells of one whose sublime trust in God has brought him peace and

contentment. The close relationship to God felt by the psalmist is expressed by the two pictures representing: the protecting Shepherd and the loving Host. The brief reference to his enemies indicates that he had not been free from trouble by the malice of the evil-disposed among his people; but the mention of them is cursory. Unlike so many other psalmists who are the victims of unscrupulous foes, and who pour out their grief in bitterness of spirit, this happy and loyal servant of God has only words of grateful recognition of the divine lovingkindness. The whole psalm breathes a spirit of calm, and peace, and contentment, brought about through faith in God, which makes it one of the most inspiring in the Psalter.

There is no adequate reason for denying a pre-exilic date for the psalm. The metre is 3 : 2, with the exception of *vv.* 1, 2, which have 3 : 3.

A Psalm. David's.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Yahweh is my Shepherd, I lack nothing ;

Beside still waters doth he lead me,
He guideth me into paths of righteousness</p> <p>4. Yea, though I go through a valley of darkness,
° With me is thy rod and thy staff,</p> <p>5. Thou spreadest out a table before me,
Thou anointest my head with oil,</p> <p>6. Yea, goodness and lovingkindness shall follow me
° And I will dwell ° in the house of Yahweh</p> | <p>2. in green pastures he maketh me to lie down,
3. he refresheth my soul ;

for his name's sake.</p> <p>I fear no evil,
° they guide me °.
in the presence of mine enemies ;
my cup overfloweth ;

all the days of my life ;

for length of days.</p> |
|--|---|

Text-critical Notes

4. Om. יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי. Read, with several commentators, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי (cp. Ps. 43³) for יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי, "they comfort me". 6. Read, with S, וְיִשְׁכְּנֵנִי for וְיִשְׁכְּנֵנִי, "and I return".

1-3. The picture of *Yahweh as Shepherd* is one in which the central thought is that of his loving care for the helpless. It is used here in reference to the individual psalmist, but elsewhere Yahweh is thought of as the "Shepherd of Israel" (Ps. 80¹, cp. 79¹³, 95⁷, 100³); so that while in such passages as these it is the flock that he shepherds, here he tends a single member of the flock. This is not without significance; for it points to the growing sense of the importance of the individual in contrast to the traditional conception of the community as the unit of divine solicitude (cp. the teaching of Jeremiah and Ezekiel). The peace and contentment of body and mind is exquisitely portrayed in the picture of restful repose *in green pastures* beside the refreshing coolness of *still waters* (cp. Isa. 49¹⁰). But greater than material comforts is the spiritual happiness of being led *into paths of righteousness*. That Yahweh leads him thus *for his name's sake* means that it is not the psalmist's own doing which enables him to walk righteously, but that for the honour of his

name Yahweh leads him; this implicit teaching on divine grace should be noted (cp. Isa. 63¹⁴). 4. It is not fanciful to see in what follows the recalling of a peril through which the psalmist had passed in days gone by; he speaks of it as going *through a valley of darkness*; as the Hebrew now stands the word for "darkness" is pointed *zalmaweth*, lit. "shadow of death"; but compound nouns, excepting as proper names hardly ever occur in Hebrew; as has long been recognized, the word should be pointed *zalmuth*, from *zelem* "shadow" (Arabic *zalima* "to be dark"), with the noun-termination *-uth* (see GK. 86 *k*). It should also be noted that "shadow of death" is out of harmony with the picture presented, the reference being simply to one of those dark ravines which abound in Palestine. With Yahweh as his guide, the psalmist says, there is nought to fear in passing through such a dark valley, in reference no doubt to wild beasts, or evil spirits, for Yahweh guides and protects him with his *rod* and *staff* (for the shepherd's rod cp. Mic. 7¹⁴). 5, 6. The picture then changes, and Yahweh is thought of as a loving Host, who *spreadest out a table before me in the presence of mine enemies*, the idea being that they may see the reward of one whose whole trust is in Yahweh. For the anointing of the guest's *head with oil*, according to the custom of the times, cp. Ps. 45⁷, Lk. 7⁴⁶. *My cup overfloweth*, lit. "my cup is satiety," is a figurative expression here, meaning that he is fully supplied with his needs. In the fulness of his trust the psalmist knows that Yahweh's *goodness and lovingkindness shall follow him all the days of his life*; and that goodness and lovingkindness is shown forth not only in the bestowal of temporal benefits, but by the far greater spiritual blessing of *dwelling in the house of Yahweh for length of days*—parallel with *all the days of my life*—for there he is in the presence of Yahweh, and partakes daily of the joy of worship.

In connexion with a psalm like this, where the exegetical notes necessarily deal with all its religious teaching, a special section on this is not called for.

PSALM . 24

IN reading this psalm the impression which is at first gained is that three fragments belonging originally to different psalms, now no longer extant, have been put together to make a single psalm. This conclusion is suggested by observing the differing subject-matter of each of the three fragments. *Vv.* 1, 2 speak of the creation of the earth; *vv.* 3–6 describe what must be the character of those who would worship Yahweh; and *vv.* 7–10 contain a summons to the gates, personified, to admit the king of glory. The psalm is, therefore, regarded by some commentators as a

piecing together of three disjointed fragments. Judged by modern canons of composition this conclusion has much to justify it. But can we apply these to an ancient poem, written by one with a vivid imagination, who is not bound by literary niceties, and who writes for those to whom his allusions are familiar? Much depends upon the occasion for which the psalm was written; but here again opinions differ, and the force of the arguments put forth must be recognized. We venture, however, to suggest that the psalm was written to be sung at the great feast, the feast of Tabernacles. Outstanding elements proper to this festival were: the worship of Yahweh as the Lord of Creation, the proclamation of him as King, and as one mighty in battle; and one of the central ritual acts was the great procession which accompanied the chariot of the Hero-King. In our psalm all these elements appear, whether directly or indirectly expressed. Thus in *vv.* 1, 2, the creation of the earth is spoken of; a very appropriate introduction to the psalm; the procession, consisting of many pilgrims from all quarters, is formed at the foot of mount Zion; then one of the priests addresses the assembled worshippers, putting the heart-searching question: "Who may ascend on to the mount of Yahweh?" Another priest takes up the answer. This preliminary completed, the great procession ascends the holy mount. On reaching the temple gates, a halt is called, and in antiphonal song the Levitical choir and the crowd of worshippers sing their triumphal song. There the psalm ceases, and we must picture to ourselves the entry of the joyful throng into the hallowed precincts. It is thus quite possible for the psalm to be regarded as a unity.

As to the date of the psalm, some authorities assign it to the time of David, others to the Maccabæan era; the former is out of the question seeing that the gates of the temple are described as "ancient"—there is not the slightest justification for regarding the gates as those of the city—and a post-exilic date, let alone a Maccabæan one, is excluded by the antique ring resounding through the psalm. Everything points to a pre-exilic date, though anything more precise cannot be postulated owing to the lack of the requisite *data*.

The metre varies; in *vv.* 1-6 it is in part 3:3, and in part short lines with two beats; *vv.* 7-10 are almost uniformly 3:3:3, with a slight variation at the end of *v.* 10. The difference of metre between the parts is no argument against unity, as this occurs also in psalms in which diverse authorship is out of the question.

David's. A Psalm.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. The earth is Yahweh's, and the fulness thereof,
2. For he founded it upon the seas,
3. Who may ascend on to the mount of Yahweh, | the world and the dwellers therein;
and upon the streams did he firmly set it.
and who may stand up in his holy place? |
|---|--|

4. He that hath innocent hands,
and a pure heart,
who hath not lifted up
° his soul ° to wrong-doing,
nor sworn deceitfully ;
5. He shall receive a blessing
from Yahweh,
and prosperity from the God of his help.
6. Such is the generation of them that that seek ° the face of the God of °
enquire after ° Yahweh °, Jacob. Selah.
7. Lift up your heads, O ye gates,
and be ye lift up, ye ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in !
8. Who is the King of glory ?
Yahweh, a strong and mighty one,
Yahweh, a mighty one in battle !
9. Lift up your heads, O ye gates,
° and be ye lift up °, ye ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in !
10. Who is he, the King of glory ?
Yahweh of hosts,
he is the King of glory ! Selah.

Text-critical Notes

4. Read, with many MSS., נִפְשִׁי for נִפְשִׁי, "my soul". 6. Add, with G, יְהוָה. Read, with G, בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. 9. Read, with many MSS. as in v. 7, וְהִנָּחֵם for וְהִנָּחֵם, "and lift up".

As to the title, the Septuagint adds "for the first day of the week"; doubtless this indicates what was customary at one time. In later days, however, it was sung on the Sabbath while the procession with the roll of the Law marched from and to the "Ark" in which the roll was kept.

1, 2. The psalmist begins by proclaiming the creative power of Yahweh: *The earth is Yahweh's, and the fulness thereof*, because he created it. This reference to the creative act of Yahweh is significant, since the recitation of the Creation-Drama was one of the central elements belonging to the celebration of the feast of Tabernacles. That the earth was *founded upon the seas, and firmly set upon the streams*, is a strange conception; it is, however, taken almost verbally from the Babylonian Creation-myth, the idea being that the earth rose up out of the primeval waters.¹ The very brief mention of the Creation in these opening verses is to be explained by the fact that the subject found more detailed expression later during the celebration of the festival; we have here only the opening ceremony. The assembled worshippers from far and near who have come to celebrate the feast are on the point of ascending mount Zion on their way to the temple. A temporary halt is called, and one of the priests accompanying the pilgrims raises his voice: *Who may ascend on to the mount of Yahweh, and who may stand up in his holy place? i.e., the temple*, showing that they are gathered at the foot of the hill. The words are not addressed directly to the throng; it is a question of general application, but especially appropriate now. 4, 5. The

¹ See Jeremias, *Handbuch der altorientalischen Geisteskultur*, pp. 122 f. (1929).

reply is made by another priest, and contains a heart-searching picture of the man whose spiritual state and manner of life are such as to make him worthy of offering worship to God : *innocent hands and a pure heart*, i.e., outwardly and inwardly of upright life ; *who hath not lifted up his soul to wrong-doing*, i.e., who has not arrogantly and of set purpose been guilty of evil courses ; it is possible that there is also a reference to idolatry here, for the word rendered " wrong-doing ", lit. " vanity ", is sometimes used in reference to idols (e.g., Ps. 31⁶, Jer. 18¹⁵, Jon. 2⁸) ; and, finally, *nor sworn deceitfully*, i.e., has not infringed the sacredness of an oath. 5. Such a one is indeed worthy to enter the house of worship, thereby receiving *a blessing from Yahweh*, and *help* in his walk in life. Thereupon the priest who had first raised his voice addresses the assembled worshippers : *Such is the generation of them that enquire after Yahweh, that seek the face of the God of Jacob* ; the implication is that the priest regards those addressed as coming under this description. The ascent of mount Zion then proceeds ; that this is not stated in so many words is for the simple reason that it was obvious.

7-10. Arrived at the temple gates there is again a halt, and a short triumphal hymn is sung ; it is rendered antiphonally, two bodies of singers taking part, with a solo voice intervening : first, the Levitical choir, in the mode of Oriental poetry, addresses the temple gates, personified : *Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye ancient doors* ; it is, of course, a command to the gate-keepers to open the gates as the procession is now ready to enter the sanctuary ; but, with the Oriental love of the dramatic, the command is clothed in this forceful style. And it continues : *that the King of glory may come in*. Here two points must be briefly dealt with. On the basis of an entirely different interpretation of the psalm from that here put forth, it is held that the " gates " are those of the city, and that the Israelite army, returning from a victory, stands before the city gates demanding entry. This curious view hardly needs refuting ; apart from other matters, is it likely that the army, flushed with victory, would be kept waiting outside the gates ? And why should the gates be closed against such a throng ? There is not a word in the psalm which suggests that the city gates are in question. The temple gates, though not as ancient as those of the city, could, at any rate, claim a respectable antiquity,¹ unless we are to regard the psalm as Davidic ! A claim which is not to be taken seriously in view of vv. 3-6. The other point is in connexion with the words : *That the King of glory may come in*. This has been interpreted as in reference to the Ark of the Covenant, with Yahweh conceived of as enthroned upon it ; 1 Sam. 4⁴¹¹ is pointed to as an illustration of the ark of the covenant, with Yahweh of hosts, " which dwelleth between the cherubim," being taken with the

¹ See Hollis *The Archæology of Herod's Temple*, passim (1934), which deals with the whole subject of the temple gates.

Israelite host to ensure victory, on to the battle-field; the words of our psalm, *Yahweh, a strong and mighty one, Yahweh, a mighty one in battle*, are, of course quoted in support. If vv. 7-10 are regarded as a separate fragment, without any connexion with the rest of the psalm, it must be granted that this view has a great deal in its favour. But in that case an objection suggests itself; if these verses are independent of the rest of the psalm, they cannot be other than a fragment, as stated; they obviously imply something that has preceded. How comes it, then, that the remainder of the psalm to which it belonged is lost? It would, on account of its antiquity, have been a psalm of high value; and to cut off a part of it in this way without preserving the rest would be difficult to account for. It is true that we have cases in which fragments of psalms have been pieced together; but they are not of the character or age of this, supposed, psalm, judging from the "fragment". We contend that unless there are stronger reasons than any that have been put forward, there is no justification for cutting up our psalm. On our view that the psalm, a decidedly ancient one, was sung during the festival of Tabernacles, the New Year feast, the psalm presents a perfectly logical unity.

But to return; when it is said: *that the King of glory may come in*, the reference is not to the bringing of the Ark of the Covenant, for, as has been pointed out, the psalm was sung during the celebration of the feast of Tabernacles, and in the midst of the festal procession about to enter the sanctuary was Yahweh's chariot in which he was conceived of as present.¹ After the Levitical choir have sung their address to the temple gates (v. 7), a solo voice puts the question: *Who is the King of glory?* the whole assembly of worshippers reply: *Yahweh, a strong and mighty one; Yahweh, a mighty one in battle!* The reference is again to the Babylonian Creation-myth, the rôle of Marduk, as in numerous other Old Testament passages, being adapted to Yahweh, see, e.g., Pss. 74¹²⁻¹⁵, 89⁸⁻¹⁰. The whole is repeated in vv. 9, 10, with the exception that in v. 10 the chorus of the worshippers varies slightly: *Yahweh of hosts, he (emphatic) is the King of glory!*

Religious Teaching

This has been dealt with in the exegetical notes.

¹ See, further on this, *Myth and Ritual*, ed. S. H. Hooke, pp. 126-133 (1933).

PSALM 25

THIS is one of the acrostic psalms consisting largely of self-contained sayings, though thought-sequence is to be observed here and there. The need of following out the alphabetical order for the beginning of each verse accounts for the somewhat artificial style. The psalm is, nevertheless, full of spiritual guidance. The enemies of the psalmist, of whom mention is twice made, point, as in the case of so many other psalms, to the existence of religious party strife. That the psalm is an "individual," *i.e.*, one in which the psalmist all through speaks of himself personally, and does not represent his people, is undoubted, in spite of the contention of some commentators that he writes on behalf of others. The last verse does not belong to the psalm (see exegetical note).

The date, like all the acrostic psalms, is late post-exilic; pointing in the same direction is the Wisdom style which occurs in several of the verses (4, 5, 12-14, 21).

The metre is 3 : 3, with the exception of *vv.* 1, 15.

David's.

- | | | |
|-------|--|--|
| 1 N. | Unto thee, Yahweh,
do I lift up my soul ; | |
| 2 J. | In thee have I trusted, let me not be
shamed, | may mine enemies not ° laugh me to
scorn °. |
| 3 J. | In truth, none that wait for thee
shall be shamed, | shamed shall they be that deal faith-
lessly to no purpose. |
| 4 7. | Thy ways, Yahweh, make me to
know, | ° and ° thy paths teach me. |
| 5 7. | Guide me in thy truth, and teach me, | for thou art the God of my help, |
| 6 1. | And on thee ° do I wait every day, | 7° ° because of thy goodness, Yahweh °. |
| 6 1. | Remember thy tender-mercies ° and
lovingkindnesses, | |
| 7 7. | The sins of my youth ° remember °
not, | for they are from of old ;
in accordance with thy mercy remember
me °. |
| 8 D. | Good and upright is Yahweh °, | he instructeth ° sinners ° in the way ; |
| 9 1. | He guideth the meek with justice, | and teacheth ° the poor ° in his way. |
| 10 J. | All the ways of Yahweh
are mercy and truth | |
| | for them that keep his | covenant and his testimonies. |
| 11 J. | For thy name's sake, Yahweh, | forgive me mine iniquity, for it is great. |
| 12 D. | Who, then, is the man that feareth
Yahweh ? | he will teach him in the way that he
chooseth ; |
| 13 J. | His soul shall abide in prosperity, | and his seed shall inherit the land. |
| 14 D. | The friendship of Yahweh is for
them that fear him, | and his covenant is for them to whom
he maketh it known. |
| 15 7. | Mine eyes are continually unto
Yahweh, | for he bringeth my feet out of the
net. |
| 16 D. | Look unto me, and be gracious unto
me, | for alone and afflicted am I. |
| 17 7. | The troubles of my heart ° are
increased °, | bring me out of my distresses ; |
| 18 D. | ° Give heed ° to mine affliction and
my trouble, | and forgive all my sins. |
| 19 7. | Behold mine enemies, for they are
many, | with bitter hatred do they hate me. |
| 20 7. | Preserve my soul, and deliver me, | let me not be put to shame, for I trust
in thee. |
| 21 7. | Let integrity and uprightness cover
me, | for I wait for thee, ° Yahweh °. |
| [22. | Redeem Israel, O God, from all his troubles]. | |

Text-critical Notes

2. Read *וְלִפְנֵי* for *וְלִפְנֵי*, which never takes *ל* after it. 4. Add, with G, *ל*. 5. Read, with some MSS., *וְיִרְדְּךָ*, for the sake of the acrostic. A half-line is wanting in this verse, while *v.* 7 is overloaded. 6. Om. *יְהוָה* for the rhythm's sake. 7. Om., with S, *וְפִשְׁעִי*, "and my transgressions", for the rhythm's sake. See *v.* 5. 8. Om. *עַל־כֵּן*, "therefore", for the rhythm's sake. 8. Read *חַטֹּאתַי* for *חַטֹּאתַי*, "sins". 9. Read *אֲבִינִי* instead of the repetition of *אֲבִינִי*. 17. Read, with the Versions, *רַבִּי* for *הַרְחִיבִי*, "are enlarged". 18. Read *קִשְׁבִּי* for *רִאִה*, "behold", for the sake of the acrostic. 21. Add, with G, *יְהוָה* for the rhythm's sake.

The simple and straightforward series of sayings of which this psalm is composed do not call for much in the way of exegetical notes.

1, 2. An expression of trust in Yahweh, on the strength of which the psalmist pleads that his enemies may *not laugh him to scorn*; on the need for the emendation here see the text-crit. note. The *enemies* are those opposed to the orthodox circles to which the psalmist belongs; 3-5, these are they that *wait for Yahweh*, they will not *be ashamed* like those *that deal faithlessly to no purpose, i.e.*, their underhand dealings bring them no advantage; the reference is to party strife. The prayer for guidance is offered in confidence both because the psalmist looks daily to Yahweh, in reference to the daily worship, and because he knows Yahweh's *goodness*; the last half-line of *v.* 7 is added here because a half-line has fallen out, whereas in *v.* 7 there is a half-line too much. 6, 7. Though he faithfully seeks to do the will of God, the psalmist is too honest to deny his shortcomings; but he throws himself upon the mercy of God, praying that his sins may not be remembered, *i.e.*, that they may be forgiven; for (8, 9) in his goodness Yahweh *instructeth* even *sinners*, so that they may walk in the right way. 10. His ways are *mercy and truth*, ever granted to those who *keep his covenant and his testimonies*. 11. With a sudden change of subject the psalmist reverts to the thought of his sin, *for it is great*, and prays again for forgiveness. 12-14. Then, in the style of the Wisdom-writer, he puts a question, and gives the answer: *Who then, is the man that feareth Yahweh?* The answer is indirect: he that feareth Yahweh is one who walks *in the way* that Yahweh *chooseth*, and whom therefore Yahweh will *teach*. Such a one shall not only himself continue to live *in prosperity*, but *his seed*, too, *shall inherit the land*; it is taken for granted that the children of a good man will follow the example of their father. The psalmist continues: *The friendship of Yahweh is for them that fear him*; the word "friendship" is full of significance; it means intimate intercourse, such as exists between friends; in this sense it is used in Ps. 55¹⁴, where the English Versions beautifully render it "sweet counsel". 15-20. After these sayings of general application the psalmist speaks of his enemies of whom brief mention had been made in *v.* 2. He begins with an affirmation of

faith: *Mine eyes are continually unto Yahweh, i.e.,* he ever looks to Yahweh for guidance, and is therefore confident that *he bringeth my feet out of the net, i.e.,* the deceitful entanglements in which his enemies involve him by their intrigues, the simile occurs several times (Pss. 9¹⁵, 31⁴, 35⁸, 57⁶). There is special need for this confidence now, for the psalmist is *alone and afflicted*; and for the third time he speaks of his *sins*, thus regarding *the troubles* of his *heart*, and his *distresses*, as due to sin. So he prays for forgiveness and deliverance from his *many* enemies, who *hate him with bitter* (lit. "violent") *hatred*. His final prayer is that *integrity* and *uprightness* may *cover* him, a forceful expression; he desires to be enveloped, as we might almost say, in the "whole armour of God" (Eph. 6¹³).

22. This verse does not belong to the psalm; it is outside the alphabetical sequence. A later copyist added it, desirous of making the psalm apply to Israel, thus generalizing it.

Religious Teaching

Very inspiring here is the teaching on the *persistence* of communion with God, in face of continued troubles, set forth by the psalmist; the stress laid on such words as "trust", "wait for", "make known", "teach", "guide", "instruct", "remember" (and "remember not"), in reference to himself in the case of the first two, in reference to the Almighty in the case of the rest, witnesses to a personal religion which is most impressive. If the psalm taught nothing but this, its value would be incalculable; it is the most outstanding element in its religious teaching; others, however, occur, but these have been referred to in the exegetical notes.

PSALM 26

THIS psalm is one of the many which refer to religious strife among the Jews (see pp. 60 ff.). The psalmist, in all probability a priest, protests his innocence of life in contrast to the ways of the wicked, *i.e.,* those who are renegades. The assertion of his righteousness, somewhat strongly claimed (v. 2), has led some commentators to regard this as an unlovely *trait*; this we believe to be unjustified (see the exeg. note on vv. 2, 3). The psalm is clearly an individual one, the writer speaks of himself personally, not as the representative of his party.

There is no direct indication of date, but the conditions reflected point to the Greek period.

The metre is 3 : 3, excepting in the opening verse, which has 2 : 2 : 3.

David's.

1. Vindicate me, Yahweh,
For in mine integrity have I ° walked ;
And ° in thee ° have I trusted, I shall not slide.
2. Try me, Yahweh, and prove me,
test my reins and my heart,
3. For thy lovingkindness is before mine
eyes, and I have walked in thy truth.
4. I do not sit with worthless men,
nor go with dissemblers,
5. I hate the assembly of evil-doers,
and do not sit with the wicked.
6. I wash mine hands in innocency,
and encompass thine altar, Yahweh,
7. That I may cause the sound of thanks-
giving to be heard, and may declare all thy wonder-works ;
8. ° I love the habitation of thine house,
the place of thy glory's abiding.
9. Snatch not away my soul with sinners,
and my life with bloodthirsty men,
10. In whose hands is evil-purpose,
and their right-hand is full of bribes.
11. But I walk in mine integrity, redeem me, ° Yahweh °, and be gracious
unto me ;
12. My foot standeth in a level place, and in the assemblies do I bless thee °,
Yahweh.

Text-critical Notes

1. Om. אֲנִי for the rhythm's sake. Read בָּךְ, cp. Ps. 25², 143⁸, for בִּיהוָה, in Yahweh". 8. Om. יְרוּחָהּ for the rhythm's sake. 11. Add יְרוּחָהּ for the rhythm's sake. 12. Read, with G, אֲבָרְכָךְ for אֲבָרְכֶךָ, "I bless".

1. The circumstances under which this psalm was written, namely, the controversy and conflict between the orthodox upholders of the traditional faith, and the innovators who endangered its purity, are reflected in the contrast which the psalmist sets forth between himself as a loyal upholder of the former, and the wicked (*R'ša'im*) representing the latter (see, on the whole subject, pp. 56 ff). As a champion of the right cause, he calls upon *Yahweh* to vindicate him, *i.e.*, to justify him in the face of his enemies ; for he is conscious of having lived wholly in accordance with the commandments of God : *in mine integrity have I walked* ; the word rendered "integrity" connotes the idea of completeness in Hebrew. He can with the greater confidence appeal to *Yahweh*, inasmuch as he has always trusted in him : *in thee have I trusted*, in consequence of which he feels safe from the danger of erring from the right way : *I shall not slide, i.e.*, from God's way, see Ps. 37³¹ where the same word is used. 2, 3. Then, in words of great boldness, prompted by his sense of loyalty to *Yahweh*, the psalmist, as it were, challenges *Yahweh* to see if he is not truly righteous ; the terms used are very searching : *Try me, prove me, test my reins* (lit. "kidneys" the seat of the emotions) *and my heart*. The words sound like an assertion of self-righteousness which no man has a right to claim ; but to understand the words in this way would be doing an injustice to the psalmist. The words which follow must be given due weight : *For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes, and I have walked in thy truth* ; the psalmist here indicates that his walking in the truth is owing to *Yahweh's* loving-kindness ; in other words, it is owing to divine love that he is enabled to walk in truth ; so that his way of living is, as we should express it, due to

divine grace. Then, in fairness to the psalmist, it must be remembered that the thought of the contrast between himself and the renegade Jews, his enemies, is ever present; it is not necessarily in any spirit of self-righteousness that one, striving to live a godly life, contrasts with this the arrogant, ungodly life of those opposed to him. The idea of associating with such is abhorrent to the psalmist, so that he can feelingly aver, 4, 5: *I do not sit with worthless men, i.e., those who are vain and unreliable, nor go with dissemblers, i.e., those who conceal their motives; I hate the assembly of evil-doers*, this points to a particular body of men (see pp. 63 ff.); *and do not sit with the wicked*, in reference to Jewish renegades. Altogether opposed to, and different from, men of this type, is the psalmist's devotion to the worship of Yahweh (6-8) and the stress laid on this may imply that the "worthless men" and "dissemblers" refer to idolaters, or, at any rate, to a syncretistic form of worship due to contact with aliens. The psalmist says: *I wash my hands in innocency, and encompass thine altar, Yahweh*; whether the washing of the hands here is to be taken literally, in reference to Exod. 30¹⁷⁻²¹, is questionable, for in that case there should be mention of the washing of the feet as well; and the addition of "in innocency" suggests a symbolical phrase, as in Pss. 24 and 73¹³. The encompassing of the altar refers probably to a procession around the altar of which there is mention elsewhere, see, e.g., the note on Ps. 118²⁷. In the temple he will lead the psalm of *thanksgiving* and declare Yahweh's *wonder-works*; this is doubtless in reference to his deliverance from his enemies. These verses indicate the psalmist as a priest who was constantly present in the temple; hence his words: *I love the habitation of (i.e., abiding in) thine house*, which is the place of the divine presence (cp. Ps. 27⁴). 9, 10. The psalmist then prays that Yahweh *will not snatch him away with sinners*; this is the force of the Hebrew word which is difficult to render in English. It is a prayer against sudden death, and shows that religious strife was sometimes very bitter. 11, 12. But this fear of death does not really trouble the psalmist, for he walks in uprightness of life, and his petition, *redeem me, Yahweh, and be gracious unto me*, is a prayer of certitude, since Yahweh has placed him in safety, *My foot standeth in a level place*, and he will *bless Yahweh in the assemblies of the faithful*.

Religious Teaching

The psalm brings before us the figure of one who, in the consciousness of his rectitude, prays that on that account God will justify him. That is one side of the picture, and taken by itself there lurks therein a grave spiritual danger, which in the Judaism of later days assumed ominous proportions (cp. Rom. 4¹⁻⁵, 11⁶, Gal. 2¹⁶). But there is another side to the picture: spiritual pride, arising out of a sense of self-righteousness, is not a characteristic of the psalmist, because he imputes

to God his rectitude of life, "in thee have I trusted, I shall not slide", he says. This is a very different attitude from that of the Pharisee in the parable (Lk. 18^{11, 12, 14}). For a man to recognize, in a spirit of true humility, that he is striving to live according to the will of God, need not generate spiritual pride, but should be a source of sanctified joy. While, on the one hand, to confess sin is a supreme duty for man, the recognition of his virtues, when rightly envisaged, is, on the other hand, to acknowledge the action of divine grace.

PSALM 27

THIS psalm consists of two parts (*vv.* 1-6, 7-14); but the content and spirit of each, respectively, are so different that most commentators agree that we have here two originally distinct psalms. *V.* 7 clearly begins a new psalm, while *v.* 6 is an appropriate conclusion. The enemies mentioned in each part offered a point of attachment between the two; this may account for their having been joined together.

The first of the two psalms presents us with the figure of one whose faith and trust in Yahweh are such that he can defy any danger that confronts him. His ardent desire is to abide in Yahweh's presence, and to worship in his temple. In the second we have the description of one in deep despair; thus, in striking contrast to what has preceded. Both psalmists are, however, alike in this, that their trust in Yahweh is unshakeable.

A date cannot be indicated, other than that both psalms are post-exilic. The metre of the first psalm is 3 : 2, but in the last verse, 6, it is 2 : 2 : 3; that of the second is similarly 3 : 2, but some serious corruption in the text makes the metre in some verses uncertain.

David's.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Yahweh is my light and my salvation,
Yahweh is the stay of my life, | of whom should I be afraid ?
of whom should I be in terror ? |
| 2. When evil-doers draw nigh against me
Mine adversaries and they that are mine
enemies, | to devour my flesh,

they stumble and fall.
my heart doth not fear ;
even so do I trust. |
| 3. Though an host encamp against me,
Though war arise against me, | that have I sought :
all the days of my life, |
| 4. One thing have I asked of Yahweh,
To dwell in the house of Yahweh
To behold the delightfulness of
Yahweh, | and to contemplate his sanctuary ;
in the day of trouble, |
| 5. For he hideth me in his tabernacle,
He covereth me in the covert of his
tent, | he setteth me up upon a rock.
o'er my foes round about me, |
| 6. And now is mine head lifted up
And I will offer in his tabernacle
Sacrifices of joy ;
I will sing and praise Yahweh. | |

7. Hearken, Yahweh, to my voice ° in the day ° that I call ;
 ° Be gracious unto me and answer me,
 8. ° my God °, ° for my heart is bitter ° ;
 Thy face do I seek, Yahweh, ° hide it not ° from me ;
 Reject not thy servant in wrath, mine help art thou,
 Cast me not off, and forsake me not, O God of my salvation,
 10. For my father and my mother have for-
 saken me, but Yahweh will receive me.
 11. Show me, Yahweh, thy way, °
 And lead me in a level path, because of them that lie in wait for me.
 12. Abandon me not to the will of my adversaries,
 For false witnesses are risen up against °
 me, ° and they breathe out ° violence.
 13. Had I not believed to see the goodness of Yahweh
 in the land of the living . . . °
 14. ° Stand fast, and let thine heart take °
 courage, and wait on Yahweh.

Text-critical Notes

7. Add בְּיוֹם for the rhythm's sake. Om. ו with many MSS. and the Versions.
 8. Add לְפָנַי for the rhythm's sake. Read, with Gunkel, פִּי מֵרָרָה לְפָנַי for פִּי מֵרָרָה לְפָנַי
 לְפָנַי, "to thee hath my heart said"; and om. בְּקֶשְׁתִּי פָנֶיךָ, "seek ye my face".
 9. Om. פָּנֶיךָ, "thy face". 12. Read, with S, וַיִּשְׁׁרָם "and they breathe out",
 for וַיִּשְׁׁרָם, "and he breatheth out". 13. The end of the verse seems to have
 fallen out. 14. Om. אֶל־יְהוָה which occurs at the end of the verse.

1-3. The exultant strain with which the psalm opens, proclaiming unshakeable trust in Yahweh, is called forth, as the sequel shows, owing to the triumph of the psalmist over his enemies. What has been achieved is due to Yahweh's guidance: *Yahweh is my light*, which has led him (cp. Ps. 43³), *and my salvation*, i.e., the state of security granted to him by Yahweh through the victory over his enemies. *Of whom*, then, need he *be afraid*? His life, being now upheld by the strength of Yahweh, *the stay of his life*, there is no cause for *terror*, intimating, however, that this had been the case previously. But he has now seen the downfall of his bloodthirsty *enemies*, compared with wild beasts, who had sought to *devour* his *flesh*. So strong is his confidence in Yahweh that he feels he could face an army without fear: *though an host encamp against me, my heart doth not fear*; and should *war* break out against him, *even so his trust* would uphold him. The language is purposely forceful in order to express the psalmist's feelings of triumph and safety. 4, 5. From what follows it is clear that the psalmist is distant from Jerusalem, though there is nothing to show that he was in a foreign land; his adversaries are those of his own race, whom he regards as the enemies of God also. As a faithful and loyal worshipper of Yahweh his one ardent desire is to be back in his native city, so that he can again *dwell in the house of Yahweh*, adding, *all the days of my life*, in reference to the daily worship in the temple. It is here that he will *behold the delightfulness of Yahweh, and contemplate his sanctuary*; these words are a little difficult, and, not unnaturally, are differently interpreted by commentators. It may be pointed out, however, that the Hebrew word for "to behold" is

used in the sense of "to experience" in Job 15¹⁷, 24¹, 27¹², and there is no reason why it should not be so understood here; in this case we might paraphrase the first part of the line thus: "to experience the sense of happiness and peace at being in Yahweh's presence". The word rendered "delightfulness", or pleasantness, occurs in Ps. 135³ in reference to Yahweh's name, cp. also 90¹⁷. As to the words, *to contemplate his sanctuary*, they offer an excellent parallel to the first half of the line; the word for "to contemplate" is used, as here, in Prov. 20²⁵ of reflecting upon something; and what the psalmist is referring to is that which, in the sanctuary, witnesses to Yahweh's presence, the Holy Place, and the altar; in contemplating these the psalmist realizes, indeed, that in the sanctuary he will be in Yahweh's presence. It is here, *in his tabernacle*, that he will be in safety should a *day of trouble* arise again. *Tabernacle* and *tent* are used of the temple, as elsewhere (Pss. 31²⁰, 61⁴, 76²); such archaisms were dear to the poet. 6. Now that he has triumphed over his foes who had been *round about* him—the expressive phrase is: *now is mine head lifted up*—his earnest wish is to show forth his gratitude in the *tabernacle* by offering *sacrifices of joy*, doubtless in fulfilment of vows made in time of peril; the expression "sacrifices of joy", lit. "of shout", may well be equivalent to the "sacrifices of thanksgiving" spoken of in Ps. 107²² for, as the psalmist adds, in his joy and gratitude he *will sing and praise Yahweh*. This forms a very fitting conclusion, which justifies the contention that we have here a psalm which is independent of what follows; the change of metre, so often characteristic of the last verse of a psalm, points in the same direction.

In striking contrast to the psalm just considered is the pathetic outpouring contained in that which follows. 7–10. The opening words mark the beginning of another psalm, as comparison with that of many other psalms shows (e.g., 55¹, 61¹, 64¹, etc.): *Hearken, Yahweh, to my voice in the day that I call*. In v. 8 the text is hopelessly corrupt; but in comparing the Hebrew of the emended text (see text-crit. note), for which we are indebted to Gunkel, with that now extant, it will be seen that there is much similarity between the two; when it is remembered that originally there was no division between the words of a line and no vowel-points, it will be realized how easily confusion could arise through careless copying.¹ The psalmist was clearly in great trouble; his *heart* is *bitter*, he prays that *Yahweh* will *not hide his face* from him; *reject not thy servant*, he says; *cast me not off*; *forsake me not*; petitions which only too plainly reveal his piteous state. He has been forsaken even by his *father and mother*, due doubtless to the false witnesses to whom he refers later. Yet, in spite of all, his trust does not give way; he can still affirm that *Yahweh*

¹ See, e.g., the plates in Kahle's *Masoreten des Westens* (1927), and they are reproductions of Hebrew MSS. of late date.

will receive him. 11, 12. The cause of all his trouble he then describes: *adversaries* who *lie in wait* for him (cp. Ps. 5⁸, where the same word occurs), *false witnesses*, who *breathe out violence*. Help from these can come only from Yahweh; therefore the psalmist prays: *Show me, Yahweh, thy way, and lead me in a level path, i.e. a place of safety*. In v. 13 some words have fallen out, but clearly they must have been to the effect that he would have given up all hope of life, had he not believed to see the goodness of Yahweh in the land of the living. His last words are those of encouragement addressed to himself in self-communing.

Religious Teaching

In each of the two psalms the central point in its religious teaching is the same, though presented from different points of view. In the former, faith in God, which has sustained the sufferer through his trials and brought him triumphantly through them, has thereby become deeper. In the latter the victim, in a piteous state of despair, surrounded by dangers, and plunged in sorrow, is borne up solely by his faith in God. Thus, whether in joy or sorrow, in prosperity or adversity, it is the certitude of God's presence and his love which dominates all things. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8³⁵⁻³⁷).

PSALM 28

THIS psalm is, in the main, a prayer for help against foes who are represented as godless (v. 5). To this is added an appeal to Yahweh to destroy them. In the latter part of the psalm all danger appears as past, and vv. 6, 7 form a short hymn of praise and thanksgiving for deliverance. The conditions reflected are the same as those of several other psalms with which we have dealt: strife between the champions of the faith handed down and those whose religion is contaminated by the infusion of alien influences. It is possible that in some cases the passionate feelings of the psalmists may have led them to represent their antagonists as worse than they really were; but there can be no doubt that the latter constituted a grave menace to traditional faith and practice. That politics became mixed up with religion (see pp. 64 f.) naturally made things worse. In this, as in other psalms of a like nature, it is an individual who is in personal danger; this points to his having been one of the leaders of the orthodox party.

To indicate a date is impossible ; but there is nothing in the psalm to exclude it from being pre-exilic.

The metre, but for the last verse, is 3 : 2.

David's.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unto thee ° do I cry, O my Rock,
lest thou be silent unto me, and I be like 2. Hear the voice of my supplication
when I lift up mine hands, ° Yahweh °, 3. Drag me not away with the wicked,
that speak peace with their neighbours, 4. Recompense them according to their
doing,
according to work of their hands °
render 5. ° They heed not ° the work of ° Yahweh,
may he cast them down, and not build them up. 6. Blessed be Yahweh, for he hath heard
7. Yahweh is my strength and my shield,
° I was holpen, and my flesh revived, 8. Yahweh is the strength ° of his people °, 9. Save thy people,
and bless thine inheritance,
Nourish them and bear them up for ever. | <p>be not deaf unto me,
them that go down to the Pit.
when I cry unto thee,
to thine innermost sanctuary.
and with the workers of iniquity,
but evil is in their heart.
and according to the wickedness of their
acts,
their desert unto them ;
nor the doing of his hands ;
the voice of my supplication ;
mine heart trusteth in him.
and from my heart I gave him thanks. °
the protection and help of his anointed °.</p> |
|--|---|

Text-critical Notes

1. Om. יהוה for the rhythm's sake. 2. Add יהוה for the rhythm's sake.
4. Om., with some MSS., תִּן לָהֶם, "recompense them", repeated from the
previous line. 5. Om. כִּי, "for". Read, with some MSS., כִּי תִּן לָהֶם for אֲרִי,
plur. 7. Read, following GS (Duhm, Gunkel):
וְיִשְׁמְרֵנִי וְיִחַלֵּל שִׁירִי
instead of the present Hebrew text: "And I was holpen, and mine heart exulted, and
from my song I gave him thanks". The rendering of the Versions was evidently
based on a different, and purer, form of the Hebrew text. 8. Read, with many MSS.
and the Versions, וְלָעֲמִיד, "to them". Om. הָיָא, for the rhythm's sake.

1, 2. The extreme peril in which the psalmist finds himself is indicated by the intensity of his appeal. In the Hebrew text "Yahweh" is inserted after *Unto thee*; but this is evidently not original as it breaks the rhythm. The Almighty is addressed as *my Rock*, an ancient designation expressive of the safety accorded to those who call upon him (cp. Pss. 18², 19⁴, and elsewhere). How urgent the psalmist's need is appears from his fear that if God is deaf to his appeal his life will be endangered; he will *be like them that go down to the Pit*, a synonym for *Sheol* (cp. Pss. 30³, 88^{3, 4}), but the lowest part of it. The prayer was offered up in the temple, for the psalmist lifts up his hands in front of the *innermost sanctuary*, i.e., the Holy of Holies (*debir*); the rendering "oracle" conveys a wrong idea as though it were a place whence utterances proceeded. 3-5. The cause of the psalmist's peril is the action of *workers of iniquity*, deceitful in word and deed; they are the enemies of God, for *they heed not the work of Yahweh*; the psalmist, therefore, prays that Yahweh may *recompense them according to their doing*. They are thus the same type of "enemy" as depicted in so many

other psalms, namely, renegades ; men who are unfaithful to the religion of their fathers. The psalmist, having thus set forth his peril, and the cause of it, then goes on to show that it is now past, and makes his acknowledgements to Yahweh for having delivered him (6, 7) ; *Blessed be Yahweh, for he hath heard the voice of my supplication* ; the psalmist addresses him as *my strength and my shield*, expressive of Yahweh's power to deliver and to protect (cp. Ps. 3³). For the rendering of the line which follows, see the text-crit. note ; it is based on the Septuagint and Syriac Versions, and is more pointed than the Hebrew text in its present form, telling of how both in body and mind he had experienced Yahweh's help and protection. 8, 9. These verses can hardly be an original part of the psalm ; they represent the *people* and the king, the *anointed*, as the objects of Yahweh's solicitude ; whereas in the rest of the psalm it is the individual psalmist. The probability seems to be that these verses were taken from some ancient psalm and added here in order to adapt it to liturgical worship.

Religious Teaching

The main theme, trust in God in the midst of danger, has already been dealt with in several other psalms.

PSALM 29

THIS fine and ancient hymn of praise is unique in the Psalter. It was doubtless inspired, in the first instance, by the awesome descriptions of the theophany on Mount Sinai (Exod. 19¹⁶⁻¹⁹), and the divine presence on Mount Horeb (1 Kgs. 19^{11, 12}). The psalmist's aim is to proclaim Yahweh's supremacy in the heavens and on earth. The heavenly powers are described as " sons of gods ", and subordinate to Yahweh ; a witness to monotheistic belief in contrast to the polytheism of the nations which regarded the highest god as different in rank, but not in nature, from the rest of the gods. The old-world conception of the thunder being the voice of Yahweh appears here in pronounced form (cp. Pss. 18¹³, 46⁶, 68³³, 77¹⁸). The belief was not unnatural, and was paralleled among other peoples who had their storm-gods and the like. It is easy to understand the awe-inspiring effect of thunder and lightning, accompanied by gale and shower, on men in those comparatively early times, unaware of their whence and why.

The psalm is certainly one of the earliest in the Psalter. It is perhaps owing to its age that the text has suffered some corruption, and that the metre is somewhat irregular. Most of the verses have two beats to the half-line ; but *vv.* 3, 4, 6 have 3 : 3, and *v.* 10 has 3 : 2 : 2.

A Psalm. David's.

1. Ascribe unto Yahweh,
O ye sons of gods,
ascribe unto Yahweh
glory and might ;
2. Ascribe unto Yahweh
the glory of his name ;
worship Yahweh
in holy array !
3. The voice of Yahweh is upon the
waters °, of Yahweh upon many waters,
4. The voice of Yahweh with power, the voice of Yahweh with splendour.
5. The voice of Yahweh
shattereth cedars,
yea, Yahweh shattereth
the cedars of Lebanon.
6. He maketh Lebanon to ° skip ° like a
calf, and Sirion like a young ° wild-ox °.
7. ° The voice of Yahweh ° heweth out
flames of fire.
8. The voice of Yahweh
shaketh the wilderness,
Yahweh shaketh
the wilderness of Kadesh.
9. The voice of Yahweh
maketh hinds to calve ;
° the voice of Yahweh °
strippeth bare the ° forests °.
And in his temple ° everyone °
saith : " Glory ".
10. Yahweh sitteth over the flood,
And Yahweh abideth
King for ever.
11. May Yahweh grant
strength to his people,
May Yahweh bless
his people with peace.

Text-critical Notes

3. Om. אֱלֹהֵי הַקְּבוֹד הַרְעִים, "the God of glory thundereth", which overloads the line, and is out of harmony with the context. 6. Read נִירְקַד for נִירְקִידם, "he maketh them to skip". Read רָאם for רָאמִים, "wild-oxen". 7. "קִלְיִי" with maqqeph, one beat. 9. Add קוֹל־יְהוָה which seems to have fallen out, but the text is uncertain; יַעֲרוֹר with fem. plur. does not occur elsewhere, it is a masc. noun. Read הַפֶּל for כָּלֵי.

1, 2. With a boldness prompted by his intense zeal for the honour and glory of Yahweh, the psalmist calls upon the heavenly hosts to *ascribe unto Yahweh glory and might*. It is to the *sons of gods* that the exhortation is made; only once elsewhere in the Psalter do we find a similar address, Ps. 97⁷, though the existence of these heavenly beings is spoken of in 89^{6, 7} (and cp. the Seraphim in Isa. 6^{2, 3}). That the *name* of Yahweh should, in a sense, be differentiated from Yahweh himself, though a vital part of him, is in accordance with ancient thought. The expression *sons of gods* (cp. Deut. 4¹⁹) indicates that the supernatural beings which were originally conceived of as independent gods were now held to be subordinate to Yahweh, thus emphasizing monotheistic belief. They are bidden to *worship Yahweh in holy array*;

just as men put on *holy array* when they worshipped (see 2 Chron. 20²¹, where the same expression is used), so the psalmist conceives of the heavenly host as robed in special garments for worship. 3-9. The conception of Yahweh's presence on earth, made known by the sound of his voice, is then dealt with in a unique manner; quaint as the thoughts are, the poetic vigour of the passage is very striking. *The voice of Yahweh is upon the waters* presents the awe-inspiring experience of the psalmist, as we may surmise, when standing on the sea-shore and listening to the roar of the thunder reverberating over the watery expanse; the sound is deafening, *with power*, but majestic, *with splendour*. Then, again, the psalmist may be recording what he had seen when he says that *the voice of Yahweh shattereth cedars*; the trees struck by lightning he believes to be the result of the thunder; that he was familiar with the *Lebanon* district is likely enough. A thunder-storm was doubtless sometimes accompanied by earthquake (cp. Exod. 19^{17, 18}, where both are mentioned), and the psalmist, with pardonable exaggeration, compares the trembling of Lebanon and Sirion (see Deut. 3⁹) with the antics of cattle. The text of vv. 7, 8 has suffered some corruption; various emendations are offered by commentators, but there is an element of uncertainty about them. In v. 7 *the voice of Yahweh* is an addition, but the rhythm seems to require it; we have followed the text as it stands in rendering *heweth out flames of fire*; but the verse may not be an original part of the psalm; the meaning would presumably be in reference to the lightning splitting a tree and setting it on fire. The mention of *the wilderness of Kadesh*, brings us to the south of Palestine; Kadesh, or Kadesh-barnea (Num. 34⁴), lay about fifty miles south of Beersheba. *The voice of Yahweh* is thought of as rolling over the widespread *wilderness* just as it resounded over the many waters, hence it *shaketh*. In v. 9 the text is again uncertain; the beginning is clear enough; the statement that *the voice of Yahweh maketh hinds to calve*, may well be in accordance with fact. What follows is quite uncertain; in place of, *the voice of Yahweh strippeth bare the forests*, already, in effect, spoken of in v. 5, one would rather expect something parallel with the preceding couplet; there is, therefore, much to be said in favour of Gunkel's suggested emendation: "scareth away the wild-goats with flames of fire", i.e., the lightning. Further, the sudden change of subject, making mention of the temple, gives the impression that it was originally preceded by another couplet. At any rate, when the psalmist says: *And in his temple everyone saith: "Glory"*, the reference is to the worship of men, following the example of the heavenly hosts. Very appropriately does the psalmist conclude with the reference to the Kingship of Yahweh; he is enthroned *over the flood*, the word "flood" (*mabbûl*) refers otherwise always to the Flood in the days of Noah; but here it is obviously an echo of v. 3. The final verse (11) expresses

a noble, patriotic wish for the welfare of the nation ; but it may well be, as many commentators hold, a later addition, for *v.* 10 makes a very fine conclusion ; the thought of Yahweh is the fittest in ending the psalm.

Religious Teaching

The central thought here of Yahweh as the God of Nature, is dealt with on p. 81.

PSALM 30

THIS beautiful psalm, somewhat in the nature of an autobiographical sketch, is the joyful thanksgiving of one who has been delivered from grievous sickness which had brought him near to death. It is composed of two more or less parallel parts (*vv.* 1-5 and 6-12). The *second* of these is in the nature of a retrospect, recalling the time of quiet happiness, which was, however, suddenly broken. But the appeal to Yahweh brought peace and contentment once more. Subordinate as the reference to sin is, as the cause of his sickness, it nevertheless does find a passing expression in each part. The *first* part recounts the return of the time of happiness, though here, too, there is a reference to the past.

The psalm is so obviously the record of the experiences of an individual that it is difficult to understand the contention of some commentators that the writer represents the nation.

The date of the psalm we believe to be pre-exilic, against the view of some commentators. The metre is mainly 2 : 2, interspersed here and there by 3 : 3.

1. *A Psalm. A Song at the Dedication of the House. David's.*

- 1 (2). I will exalt thee, Yahweh, for thou and didst not suffer my foes to rejoice
didst draw me up, over me.
- 2 (3). Yahweh, my God,
I cried unto thee,
and thou didst heal me.
- 3 (4). Yahweh, thou broughtest up
my soul from Sheol,
Thou didst keep me alive ° from them that go down ° to the Pit.
- 4 (5). Sing praise to Yahweh, O ye godly ones, and give thanks to his holy ° name °.
- 5 (6). ° For there is suffering when he is wrath °,
but life in his favour ;
in the evening ° weeping,
but joy at morn.
- 6 (7). As for me, I said in my prosperity :
“ I shall never be moved ! ”
- 7 (8). ° Through thy favour I was made to stand
upon my strong mountain ° ;
thou didst hide thy face,
I became dismayed.
- 8 (9). Unto thee, Yahweh, I cried, and unto my God ° I made sup-
plication :

- 9 (10). What profit is there in my blood
if I go down to corruption?
Should dust give thee thanks,
should it declare thy truth?
- 10 (11). Hear, Yahweh, and have mercy on
me, Yahweh, be thou my helper.
- 11 (12). Thou hast turned my mourning
to dancing for me;
thou hast loosed my sackcloth,
and hast girded me with joy,
that ° my heart ° may sing praise to thee,
and not be silent;
Yahweh, my God,
I will give thanks to thee for ever.

Text-critical Notes

3. Read, with *K'thib* and the Versions, מִיִּירָדִי for מִיִּירָדִי, "that I should not go down," an anomalous form for מִיִּירָדִי (see GK. 69m). 4. Lit. "memorial", cp. Ps. 97¹³, and see Exod. 31¹⁸. 5. Lit. "For a stroke is in his wrath", reading, with Halévy and Gunkel, נָנַע for נָנַע, "a moment". Om. יָלִין which overloads the half-line. 8. Read, with Gunkel:

עַל-הַרְרִי עֲזָרָה
בְּרִצְוֹנוֹ הַעֲמָדָה

(omitting יְהוָה which overloads the half-line). 8. Read, with G, אֱלֹהֵי for אֱלֹהֵי, "my Lord". 12. Read, cp. G, קִבְדִּי, lit. "my liver", for קְבוֹד, "glory".

For the title, see p. 14.

1-3. In thanksgiving for his recovery from very serious illness, the psalmist praises God: *I will exalt thee, Yahweh*, and he uses a significant expression, *for thou didst draw me up*, in reference to his having been, as it were, lifted up from slipping down into the depth of *Sheol*, mentioned subsequently. The *foes* of whom the psalmist speaks must refer to evil-disposed persons who mocked at his trust in Yahweh, and would have been glad to see his faith unavailing; unbelievers of this kind existed in every period of Israel's history. Hence the psalmist's words: *thou didst not suffer my foes to rejoice over me*. He then recalls how he *cried unto Yahweh*, and how he was healed of his sickness; this must have been very severe since he came nigh to death; but Yahweh brought him up as he felt he was going down to *Sheol*, and was thus kept from joining those who *go down to the Pit*, the lowest part of *Sheol* (cp. 28¹, and "the lowest pit" 88⁶). 4. It is not enough that he should personally praise Yahweh for his recovery; he, therefore, calls upon those like-minded with himself, the *godly ones*, to *sing praise to Yahweh*, and to *give thanks to his holy name*, lit. "memorial," cp. Exod. 31¹⁸: "this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations". 5. The psalmist then implicitly acknowledges that his sickness had been sent to him because he had, through sin, aroused the *wrath* of Yahweh; for the emendation of this sentence see the text-crit. note. But he feels that he has been forgiven, for by Yahweh's *favour* he now enjoys *life*; it had been a time of sorrow, but that is past: *in the evening weeping, but joy at morn*. This concludes the first

part of the psalm. The subject-matter of the second part is similar to what had already been said. This repetition, in substance, is fully comprehensible if one reflects upon the deeply stirred emotions of the psalmist. Moreover, it will be noticed that in the first part one stage of the psalmist's experiences is not mentioned, namely, that which preceded the period of his sickness. To make this good, he now indicates three stages. The first, 6, 7^a, tells of his state of well-being before he was struck down with sickness; at that time he had said to himself in a boastful spirit: *I shall never be moved*; true, his innate religious sense ascribed this to Yahweh: *Through thy favour I was made to stand upon my strong mountain* (for the necessary emendation see text-crit. note), i.e., through Yahweh's favour he lived in unassailable prosperity. But, as v. 5 shows, he had overlooked a fatal fact, that of his sin; hence his significant words, 7^b, *thou didst hide thy face, I became dismayed*; why should Yahweh turn from his servant except for his having been unfaithful to the divine precepts? And so he *became dismayed*, for his sickness had the effect of opening his eyes. This is the second stage of his experiences. In his state of sickness (8) he *cried* unto Yahweh, and *made supplication* unto God. 9, 10. His plea, it must be confessed, is naïve, and betrays a somewhat undeveloped conception of God: *What profit is there in my blood (i.e., life) if I go down to corruption?* he asks; as though it were to the advantage of the Almighty to preserve his servant's life; for the *dust* cannot *give thanks* nor *declare his truth*! The psalmist urges that his death will be the loss of a devout worshipper to Yahweh, and thus a reason why *Yahweh* should *have mercy* on him, and *be his helper*. If, on the one hand, this reveals a very inadequate apprehension of the Divine Personality, it offers, on the other hand, a touching picture of the psalmist's childlike intimacy and communion with God. 11. In his mercy, God grants him health and strength again. Thereupon the psalmist tells of the third stage of his experiences: *Thou has turned my mourning to dancing for me*; the reference here is to the festivities which took place after the sacrifice of thanksgiving had been offered; this feast, given by the offerer to his friends, is referred to, e.g., in 1 Sam. 1⁴, 9^{12, 13, 22-24}, see also Exod. 32^{6, 19}. This, therefore, the psalmist recalls, and thinks of how he rose from his bed of sickness, for God had *loosed his sackcloth*, and in place thereof had *girded him with joy*; and of how his *heart* (see text-crit. note) *sang praise* to God, and was *not silent*. His deep gratitude he expresses once more in his final words: *Yahweh, my God, I will give thanks to thee for ever.*

Religious Teaching

Trust in God's mercy, gratitude for answer to prayer, and consequent "rejoicing in the Lord", are the outstanding features of the

psalm. If the conception of God is revealed as somewhat undeveloped, it is compensated for by the intimacy of the psalmist's walk with God.

PSALM 31

THIS psalm is one of many in which an individual servant of Yahweh, menaced by the bitter enmity of unscrupulous foes, pours out his complaint to God; at the same time his unceasing prayer brings him the certitude of deliverance from his troubles. The somewhat irregular composition of the psalm has led some commentators to postulate composite authorship, especially as with *v.* 9 a new beginning seems to be made. This supposition we believe, however, to be unnecessary. When the dire state of peril in which the psalmist finds himself is taken into account, the fear of his enemies, alternating with trust in God, the fear of death, with the conviction of divine help, it is surely natural enough that a logical thought-sequence should be wanting.

Indications in the psalm suggest a post-exilic date.

The metre is very variable, which may also reflect the psalmist's mental state.

1. *For the Precentor : A Psalm. David's.*

- | | | |
|----------|--|--|
| 1 (2). | In thee, Yahweh, I seek refuge,
In thy righteousness deliver me, | let me never be put to shame,
and save me. |
| 2 (3). | Bow down thine ear unto me,
Be to me a strong rock, | haste thee, ° Yahweh °, save me;
a house of defence to preserve me; |
| 3 (4). | For my rock and defence art thou; | for thy name's sake lead me and guide me. |
| 4 (5). | Bring me out of the net they have hid for me, | for thou, ° Yahweh °, art my refuge. |
| 5 (6). | Into thy hand I commend my spirit, | thou dost redeem me °, O God of truth. |
| 6 (7). | ° Thou hatest ° them that cleave to false-idols, | but as for me, I trust in Yahweh. |
| 7 (8). | Let me rejoice and be glad in thy lovingkindness, | thou who didst see mine affliction, |
| 8 (9). | Thou didst not deliver me into the hand of the enemy, | And knewest the troubles of my soul.
thou didst set my feet in a large place. |
| 9 (10). | Be gracious unto me, Yahweh, for I am in trouble, | mine eye wasteth away for grief °; |
| 10 (11). | For my life is spent with sorrow,
My strength faileth ° through affliction °, | and my years with sighing,
my bones consume away. |
| 11 (12). | Because of all mine adversaries
I am become a reproach,
To my neighbours ° a terror °,
A fear to mine acquaintance;
They that see me without
Flee away from me. | |
| 12 (13). | I am forgotten as one dead, out of mind, | I am become like a destroyed vessel. |
| 13 (14). | For I hear the defaming of many,
While they take counsel together against me, | terror all around,
to take my life they plan. |
| 14 (15). | As for me, in thee do I trust °, | I say, My God art thou : |

- 15 (16). In thine hand are my times, deliver ^{me} from the power of mine enemies and persecutors.
- 16 (17). Make thy face to shine on thy servant, save me in thy lovingkindness.
- 17 (18). Yahweh, let me not be ashamed, for I call on thee,
Let the wicked be ashamed,
Let them be silent in Sheol.
- 18 (19). Let the lying lips be dumb, that speak ° with pride and contempt.
- 19 (20). How great ° is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee,
Which thou hast wrought for them that trust thee, before the children of men ;
- 20 (21). Thou hidest them in the covert ° of thy wings °, ° from the calumnies ° of men,
Thou treasurest them ° in thy shelter °, from the strife of tongues.
- 21 (22). Blessed be Yahweh,
For he hath shown wondrously his lovingkindness ° In the time of trouble °.
- 22 (23). As for me, I said in my fear, ° I am cut off ° from before thine eyes ;
Nevertheless, thou didst hear
The voice of my supplications,
When I cried unto thee.
- 23 (24). O love Yahweh, all ye his saints, the faithful doth Yahweh keep ;
But he plenteously requiteth him that acteth proudly.
- 24 (25). Be strong, and let your heart stand firm, all ye that wait for Yahweh.

Text-critical Notes

1. Add with G, יהוה־לִּי. 2. Add with 1 MS. יהוה. 4. Add יהוה for the rhythm's sake. 5. Om. יהוה, which gives a beat too much. 6. Read שָׂנְאֵהָ for שָׂנְאֵהוּ, "I hate". 9. Om. נַפְשִׁי וּבָטְנִי, "my soul and my body", which overloads the line. 10. Read with GS, בְּעֵוְנִי for בְּעֵוְנִי, "because of mine iniquity". 11. Read מִרְאָה for מִרְאָה, "very". 14. Om. יהוה, which gives a beat too much. 18. Om. עַל־צַדִּיק עֲתָה, "against the righteous man insolently", which overloads the half-line. 19. Add with 3 MSS. G יהוה. 20. Read פְּנֵי־ךָ for פְּנֵי־ךָ, "before thee", cp. Ps. 61⁴. Read, with Duhm, מְרִכְסִי for מְרִכְסִי, "plottings". Read בְּמִסְכָּה for בְּמִסְכָּה, "in a shelter". 21. Read, with Kittel, בְּעִיר מְצוּרָה for בְּעִיר מְצוּרָה, "in a defenced city". 22. Read, with many MSS., גְּבוּרָתִי, cp. Ps. 88⁴, for גְּבוּרָתִי.

1-5. These opening verses are largely identical with Ps. 71¹⁻³. Trust in Yahweh conditions the petitions which follow. The intermingling of prayers and utterances of faith is entirely natural for one in trouble ; a logical thought-sequence is not to be looked for in such a case. The metaphor of the *net* for the entanglement brought about by plotting opponents is familiar to the psalmists (see 9¹⁵, 37⁷, 57⁶, 140⁵). That the foes of the victim are idolaters (6) is an additional reason why Yahweh's help should be accorded to one whose sole trust is in him ; and past experience of deliverance from *affliction* prompts the prayer : *Let me rejoice and be glad in thy lovingkindness . . .* (7, 8).

With *v.* 9 we have what looks like the beginning of a new psalm ; on the other hand, there is no reason why *vv.* 1-8 should not be regarded as an introduction to the main portion of the psalm (9-13). These verses describe in fuller detail the sorry plight in which the psalmist finds

himself. His sufferings are of long standing, *my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing*; the words recall the prophet Jeremiah's plaint: "Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?" (20¹⁸). As a result of the defamation on the part of his enemies (13) the psalmist has become even to his friends *a reproach and a terror*; here again we are reminded of Jeremiah's experience: "I am become a laughingstock all the day, everyone mocketh me . . . because the word of Yahweh is made a reproach unto me, and a derision all the day. . . . For I have heard the defaming of many, terror on every side" (20⁷⁻¹⁰); indeed, the whole of Jer. 20⁷⁻¹³, compared with our psalm, is very instructive, though the relationship between the two is difficult to determine. 14-16. A further asseveration of trust in God, followed by petitions, shows affinity of style with the first part of the psalm, and therefore suggests unity of composition. In the words, *In thine hand are my times*, we have a somewhat unusual expression, *times* is used of fate or destiny, cp. Isa. 33⁶. Some antique conception must lie behind the expression, *Make thy face to shine on*, meaning, "Show that thou hast pleasure in"; it occurs only in the later literature, Num. 6²⁵ (P), and is used frequently in post-exilic psalms (67¹, 80³, 7, 19, 119¹³⁵). 17, 18. As so often in the psalms, the beauty of a passage is marred by a malediction on the enemies: *Let the wicked be ashamed, let them be silent in Sheol*; silence reigns in the abode of the departed, cp. Pss. 94¹⁷, 115¹⁷. The psalm closes with words of praise and an acknowledgement of Yahweh's goodness to those *that trust* in Him (19-24). In a number of instances words and phrases in these verses are echoes from other psalms. The triumphant exhortation with which the psalm ends is particularly fine: *Be strong, and let your heart stand firm, all ye that wait for Yahweh*.

Religious Teaching

The religious elements in this psalm are largely similar to those in a number of other psalms. Trust in God when in trouble is the dominating note. The intimate relationship which the psalmist feels to exist between him and his God is very beautifully brought out: he knows that God knows all his grief, therefore he can pour out his heart to one who feels for him; though all his friends forsake him, he has a Friend who is ever mindful of him; his destiny is in God's hands, therefore he is convinced that ultimately all will be well. As containing the words hallowed by being uttered by the Saviour on the Cross, the psalm must ever stand out as one of peculiar sanctity: "Into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Lk. 23⁴⁶).

PSALM 32

THIS psalm is reckoned among the seven penitential psalms by the Church, though the penitential element is less pronounced than those of joy and gratitude at the obliteration of sin. It is the utterance of one who, in the conviction of the forgiveness of past sin, experiences the happiness of the peace of God. The nature of the sin of which the psalmist has been guilty is not indicated; but he has been brought to acknowledge it through the stroke of sickness which, as he believes, is the mark of divine displeasure. His recovery is to him the assurance that his sin has been forgiven. The sense of righteousness, engendered by the conviction of freedom from sin, induces the psalmist to act as instructor and guide in the way of righteousness to others. The noticeable style of the Sage in the latter part of the psalm is distinctly reminiscent of the Wisdom Literature, a fact which points to the post-exilic period; a more exact date cannot be assigned to it.

The text has undergone some corruption here and there; to this, at any rate in part, may be due the somewhat irregular metre; 2 : 2 and 3 : 2 predominate.

David's. Maskil.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, | whose sin is covered; |
| 2. Blessed is the man to whom Yahweh | doth not impute iniquity, |
| And in whose spirit there is no deceit. | |
| 3. When I kept silence my bones waxed old, | as I moaned all the day. |
| 4. For day and night lay heavy | thy hand upon me; |
| My life-sap was ° dried ° | ° like ° the summer drought. Selah. |
| 5. My sin I made known to thee, | and mine iniquity I hid not, |
| I said, I will confess, | concerning my transgression, to |
| | Yahweh; |
| And thou forgavest | ° mine iniquity ° and my sin. Selah. |
| 6. Therefore unto thee | shall every godly man pray; |
| ° In the time of distress °, | at the flowing of many waters,— |
| | Unto him they shall not come nigh. |
| 7. Thou art a hiding-place for me, | thou preservest me from trouble, |
| With shouts of deliverance dost thou encompass me. Selah. | |
| 8. I will instruct thee and teach thee, | in the way thou shouldst walk; |
| I will counsel thee, ° will guide thee °, | on thee is mine eye. |
| 9. ° Be not ° like a horse, like a mule, | without understanding, |
| ° Which is brought unto thee ° | with bridle and bit. |
| 10. Many are the pangs of the wicked; | |
| But he that trusteth in Yahweh, | lovingkindness encompasseth him. |
| 11. Rejoice in Yahweh, | and be glad, O ye righteous. |
| | Shout for joy, all ye upright of heart. |

Text-critical Notes

4. Lit. "was changed". Read כ for ב, "in". 5. Read עוֹנִי for עוֹן, "iniquity". 6. Read, with Duhm, לַעֲת מִצָּדִק for לַעֲת מִצָּדִק רַק, "at a time to find, howbeit". 8. Add, with G, אֶעֱצֶה for the rhythm's sake. 9. Read תִּהְיֶה for תִּהְיֶה, "be ye". Lit. "to, bring unto thee"; read, with Duhm, לִלְרִיב אֵלַי (לִלְרִיב) for בֵּל קֵרֵב אֵלַי, "not to come nigh unto thee"; and om., as a late gloss, עֲדִיו לְבָלִים, "to curb its trappings"; בָּלִים is an Aramaic word which does not occur elsewhere in the O.T.

1, 2. In expressing the blessedness of him *whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered*, the psalmist confesses, by implication, that he has been guilty of sin in the past; he does so explicitly later. The three words *transgression, sin, iniquity*, express different aspects of the concept of wickedness: "transgression" (*pešā'*) contains the idea of rebellion against God; "sin" (*ḥāṭā'āh*) is equivalent to the Greek *ἀμαρτία*, "a missing of the mark", thus, not of the nature of wilful sin, as the preceding; and "iniquity" (*āwōn*) means lit. a "turning off" from the way, and, therefore, again deliberate going wrong. Similarly with the three words used for the obliteration of sin: to "forgive" (*nāsā'*) is lit. to "lift up", or "carry away", the burden of sin; to "cover" (*kāsāh*) expresses the idea of covering over sin, and thus putting it out of sight, overlooking it; while not to "impute" (*ḥāšab*) is, in effect, the equivalent of imputing righteousness, cp. Rom. 4⁶ ". . . unto whom God reckoneth righteousness", followed by the quotation of these two verses. Some commentators regard the clause, *And in whose spirit there is no deceit*, as a gloss, for metrical reasons; but an isolated hemistich of this kind is of frequent occurrence in the *Psalms* (e.g., 2¹²). The psalmists were not bound by rigid metrical rules; in this case the words, as an expression of sincerity, are wholly appropriate. 3, 4. In these verses the psalmist, looking back, records his conviction that as long as he refrained from confessing his sin, *when I kept silence*, the mark of divine displeasure, i.e., his sickness, abode with him; his *bones waxed old*, lit. became "worn out"; by the *bones* are meant his whole bodily frame (cp. Pss. 22¹⁴, 31¹⁰, 102³); his very *life-sap* seemed to "change", as the Hebrew word means literally, its very moisture became *dried up*; and he thinks of the *summer drought*, the parched land; he was suffering from severe fever. The ancient Hebrew belief that all suffering is the visible sign of God's wrath for sin appears here again. Then, in 5, the definite confession of sin is made, in reference of course, to the past, together with the assurance of forgiveness. Out of his own experience the psalmist adds (6, 7), *Therefore unto thee shall every godly man pray*, for then there is the certitude of deliverance from trouble. For the metaphor of *the flowing of many waters*, i.e., dangers, cp. Pss. 18¹⁶, 69^{1, 2}, 144⁷. The psalmist's words are continued in 8, 9; they are not words put into the mouth of Yahweh, as might be gathered from: *on thee is mine eye*, cp. Ps. 33¹⁸, Jer. 32¹⁹; the whole passage is in the style of the Wisdom teacher, the verbs occur frequently in the Wisdom Literature; *in the way thou shouldst walk* refers to the way of the Law; *mine eye* refers to the eye of the teacher; with *Be not like a horse, like a mule*, cp. Prov. 26³. For the textual difficulty in 9 see the text-critical notes. The closing note of triumphant happiness, 10, 11, reflects the conscience-cleared joy of the forgiven sinner.

Religious Teaching

This is brought out in the exegetical notes ; but there is one matter which demands some further consideration. While we must recognize the whole-hearted gratitude and loyalty to God so beautifully expressed by the psalmist, there is no disguising the fact that to him the act of confession *per se* acquires forgiveness ; that confession is a condition of forgiveness goes without saying ; but if that alone procures forgiveness it means that this is attained by the act of man ; in other words, that a good work acquires justification in the sight of God. Unless it is recognized that forgiveness is of divine grace, quite apart from anything that man can do, there is the danger of the belief in the efficacy of works. Forgiveness is something more than the result of human action. While, then, it is fully recognized that the religious teaching of this psalm insists on the need of penitence and confession, it must be said that, from the Christian point of view, it is lacking in the recognition of divine grace. This, to be sure, is to be expected ; nevertheless, in some other psalms there is a distinct, even though only implicit, acknowledgement of divine guidance whereby the sinner is turned to penitence.

PSALM 33

A HYMN of praise and thanksgiving, this psalm, as its contents show, was written in commemoration of deliverance from some threatened national peril. The thought-sequence brings this out clearly : the call to rejoice and give thanks because of Yahweh's righteousness and mighty acts ; this is illustrated, above all, in his creative power ; further, he it is who frustrates the plans and overrules what nations intend ; he observes the doings of men and discerns their purposes ; armies and all the paraphernalia of war are of no avail against his will ; and those who trust in him are delivered. Hence the final note, like that at the opening, is one of rejoicing. The separating of the psalm into independent divisions, thereby obscuring this thought-sequence, has prevented some commentators from recognizing the *raison d'être* of the composition. Opinions differ, as usual, with regard to date ; some assign it to pre-exilic times, others to the Maccabæan era. There is nothing at all in the psalm which suggests the latter ; more is to be said for the former view, though one or two considerations make this doubtful too : its thought-contact with some of the later literature, its general style ; and especially the non-mention of a king of Judah in contradistinction to a Gentile king in *v.* 16 ; during the monarchical period

reference would surely have been made to Yahweh's anointed in contrast to a king whose armies were of no avail. The psalm probably belongs to the Persian period.

The text has been extraordinarily well preserved, another indication of late date. The metre is uniformly 3 : 3, with the exception of vv. 10, 12, which are 4 : 3.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rejoice, O ye righteous, in Yahweh, 2. Give thanks to Yahweh with harp, 3. Sing to him a new song, 4. For righteous is the word of Yahweh, 5. He loveth righteousness and justice, 6. ° By his word ° were the heavens made, 7. He gathereth ° as in a bottle ° the sea-waters, 8. All the earth feareth Yahweh, 9. For he spake, and it was done, 10. Yahweh counteracteth the purpose of nations, 11. ° His purpose ° standeth fast for ever, 12. Blessed is the nation whose God is Yahweh, 13. From heaven Yahweh looketh down, 14. From the place of his dwelling he looketh forth 15. He fashioneth altogether their heart, 16. No king is saved by a mighty-host, 17. Vain is the horse for victory, 18. Behold, the eye of Yahweh is on them that fear him, 19. To deliver their soul from death, 20. Our soul doth wait for Yahweh, 21. For in him our heart rejoiceth, 22. May thy love, Yahweh, be upon us, | <p>for the upright praise is fitting.
sing praise with a ten-stringed lute ;
play skilfully, with a shout-of-joy.
and all his doing is in faithfulness ;
the earth is full of ° his lovingkindness °.
and by the breath of his mouth all their host ;
he placeth the deeps in treasure-houses ;
all the dwellers of the world stand in awe of him ;
he commanded, and it stood fast.</p> <p>he frustrateth the plans of the peoples ;
the intents of his heart from generation-to-generation.
the people whom he hath chosen for his inheritance.
he seeth all the children of men ;</p> <p>on all the dwellers on the earth ;
he discerneth all their works.
by great-strength no warrior is preserved ;
by its mighty strength it protecteth not.</p> <p>on them that look for his love,
and to keep them alive from famine.
our help and our shield is he,
° in his holy name we trust.
even as we have waited for thee.</p> |
|--|---|

Text-critical Notes

The Versions have the title "David's", possibly it stood in the Hebrew text originally as in the preceding and following psalms. 5. Read חֶסֶד יְהוָה חֶסֶד יְהוָה for חֶסֶד יְהוָה, "the lovingkindness of Yahweh", for the rhythm's sake. 6. Read, for a similar reason, בְּדָבַר יְהוָה for בְּדָבַר יְהוָה, "by the word of Yahweh". 7. Read כְּהֶאֱמַר as in Job 38²⁷, for כְּהֶאֱמַר, "like a heap". 11. Read עֲצֵר יְהוָה for עֲצֵר יְהוָה, "the purpose of Yahweh", for the rhythm's sake. 21. Om. the repetition of כִּי, "for".

1-3. A call to the righteous to rejoice in Yahweh, and to praise him ; gratitude goes together with joyfulness, hence the psalmist's exhortation : *Rejoice, Give thanks, Sing a new song* ; this last (cp. Pss. 40³, 96¹, 98¹) points to a special occasion for which the psalm was composed. Hand and voice are to join in giving praise ; for the *shout-of-joy* (*têru'āh*) cp. Ps. 47⁵, and for the musical instruments used in worship see the notes on Ps. 150. The psalmist sets forth the right way of praise thus : first, the extolling of Yahweh's *righteousness, faithfulness, loving-kindness*, and *justice*, the visible proofs of which *the earth is full*. 4, 5.

Then follows the confession of faith in Yahweh's acts of *righteousness* and *lovingkindness*. 6-9; His mere utterance brings the heavenly spheres into existence, cp. Gen. 1⁶⁻⁸; it required but *the breath of his mouth* to create *all their host*, i.e., the stars, conceived of as personalities; here we recall Job 26¹³, where it speaks of his breath making the heavens beautiful; the expression is really synonymous with the utterance of the word, which involves the giving forth of breath; it connotes also the energy of life, see Job 27³, 33⁴. Further, in reference to Gen. 1⁷, the psalmist speaks of the gathering of the waters of the sea; this is compared with the pouring of water into a bottle (lit. "skin"), in order to emphasize the stupendous power of the Creator; the Hebrew text has, "He gathereth as an heap", but the thought is taken from Job 38³⁷, "Who can pour out the bottles of heaven?" Similarly, *he placeth the deeps in treasure-houses*, is suggested by Job 38²², "Hast thou entered the treasures of snow, or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail?" The thought of Yahweh's creative power inspires fear in *all the earth*, *For he spake and it was done, he commanded, and it stood fast*. Having thus offered praise to Yahweh, the psalmist now turns to contemplate his action on earth (10-19); and here, in the following of the prophets, he enunciates the doctrine of Yahweh as the God of History; and this with special reference to the event which prompted the composition of the psalm; what this event was is not indicated, but the principle set forth is of universal application; whatever nations may plan and purpose is brought to nought unless it is in accordance with the purpose of Yahweh, which, like the eternal heavens, *standeth fast for ever*. Therefore, *Blessed is the nation* (i.e., of Israel) *whose God is Yahweh*. The remaining verses of this section speak of Yahweh's intimate knowledge of the thoughts and doings of all men. The event commemorated is again referred to in the words *No king is saved by a mighty-host . . .*, for Yahweh delivers those *that fear him*, and *that look for his love, from death and famine*, the results of an enemy's victory. The concluding verses, 20-22, proclaim trust *in the holy name of Yahweh*, which makes the *heart rejoice*; and the psalm ends with the prayer: *May thy love, Yahweh, be upon us, even as we have waited for thee*.

The religious teaching has been brought out by what has been said, so that a special section on this is not called for here.

PSALM 34

THIS is another of the so-called acrostic psalms, each verse beginning with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet, in order; the sixth letter has,

however, fallen out, doubtless through the carelessness of a copyist; and a final line has been added which does not belong to the original alphabetical scheme. The psalm is divided into two clearly distinct parts; the first (vv. 1-10) is the psalmist's thanksgiving for deliverance from evil; in the second (vv. 11-21), written in the style of the Wisdom Literature, he gives an instruction on honouring Yahweh. Thus, while the first part is an expression of gratitude, the second tells of something done to show forth that gratitude in practical form. Some commentators hold that the psalm was written in the name of the community collectively; but that cannot be the case, for in v. 3 it is said: "O magnify Yahweh with me"; and the whole of the second part, written in the first person, is addressed to "my sons", the Wisdom Teacher's regular form of address. On the doctrine of retribution taught in the psalm see the section on Religious Teaching, pp. 86 ff. The date is sufficiently indicated by its Wisdom Literature form as post-exilic. The metre is, with few exceptions, 3 : 3.

David's; when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech; and he drove him out and he departed.

- | | | |
|------------|---|--|
| 1 (2) N. | I will bless Yahweh at all times, | continually shall his praise be in my mouth. |
| 2 (3) D. | In Yahweh shall my soul glory, | the humble shall hear, and be glad. |
| 3 (4) J. | O magnify Yahweh with me, | let us exalt his name together. |
| 4 (5) T. | I sought Yahweh, and he answered me, | and from all my fears he delivered me. |
| 5 (6) H. | ° Look ° unto him and be lightened °, | and ° your faces ° shall not be ashamed. |
| 6 (7) L. | This afflicted one cried, and Yahweh heard, | and saved him out of all his troubles. |
| 7 (8) M. | The angel of Yahweh encampeth | around them that fear him, and delivereth them. |
| 8 (9) D. | O taste and see that Yahweh is good, | blessed is the man that trusteth him. |
| 9 (10) L. | O fear Yahweh, ye his saints, | for there is no want to them that fear him. |
| 10 (11) D. | ° Wealthy men ° lack, and suffer hunger, | but they that seek Yahweh lack not °. |
| 11 (12) L. | Come, ye children, hearken unto me, | the fear of Yahweh will I teach you. |
| 12 (13) D. | Who is the man that desireth life, | that loveth days, and to see prosperity? |
| 13 (14) J. | Keep thy tongue from evil, | and thy lips from uttering deceit; |
| 14 (15) D. | Depart from evil, and do good, | seek peace, and pursue it. |
| 15 (16) L. | The eyes of Yahweh are toward the righteous, | and his ears toward their cry; |
| 16 (17) D. | The face of Yahweh is against evil-doers, | to cut off their remembrance from the earth. |
| 17 (18) L. | They cry, and Yahweh heareth, | and from all their ills he delivereth them. |
| 18 (19) T. | Near is Yahweh to the heart-broken, | and he helpeth the crushed in spirit. |
| 19 (20) T. | Many are the distresses of the righteous one, | but from all of them Yahweh delivereth him; |
| 20 (21) L. | He keepeth all his bones, | not one of them is broken. |
| 21 (22) M. | Evil slayeth the wicked one, | they that hate the righteous shall be punished. |
| 22 (23). | Yahweh redeemeth the soul of his servants, | and none that trust in him shall be held guilty. |

Text-critical Notes

5. Read, following the Versions, הָבִיטוּ אֵלָיו וְנִהְיָוּ for הָבִיטוּ אֵלָיו וְנִהְיָוּ, "they looked unto him and were lightened". Read פְּנֵיהֶם for פְּנֵיהֶם, "their faces". 10. Read, with G, צְבָרִים (cp. Gen. 13²) for צְבָרִים, "young lions". Om. פְּלִטָּוֹב, "all good", for the rhythm's sake.

The utter inappropriateness of the title must be due to its having been placed in its present position by mistake. The reference is to 1 Sam. 21¹⁰⁻¹⁵, "Abimelech" should, of course, be Achish.

1, 2. The psalmist expresses his gratitude to Yahweh for deliverance from trouble, which is mentioned in *vv.* 4, 6. In the fullness of his thankful heart he calls upon others to join with him in *magnifying Yahweh*. 3. Just as he had *sought Yahweh* when in distress, and was *answered*, so he exhorts all to *Look unto him and be lightened* (4-6), the expression means that their faces will beam with joy (cp. Isa. 60⁵). 7. The mention of *the angel of Yahweh* encamping around them that *fear him*, may be in reference to 2 Kgs. 6¹⁷; but it is more probable that we have here an indication of the developed angelology of post-exilic times due to Persian influence. 8-10. There follows a further invitation to trust in Yahweh who provides for all who fear him. For the term for "saints" (*qādōš*) used here, cp. 16³, see also Deut. 33³. In this context the reference to "young lions" in the Hebrew text comes in strangely when men are being spoken of (see, however, 35¹⁷); the Septuagint rendering *Wealthy men*, so often synonymous with the wicked, is more likely to represent the original reading.

Vv. 11-18 are wholly in the style of the Wisdom Literature: *Come, ye children*, or sons, is the mode of address of the Wisdom Teacher, see Prov. 4¹, 5⁷, 7²⁴ and often. The teaching of *the fear of Yahweh* was the basic subject of the instruction of the Sages, see Prov. 1⁷, 9¹⁰, 15³³, etc.; that through this a man's days were prolonged is taught in Prov. 10²⁷; for the keeping of the tongue from evil, cp. Prov. 13³, 21²³. It is unnecessary to indicate this further; every verse in this part of the psalm has its parallel, sometimes verbal, in one or other of the Wisdom books.

Religious Teaching

Gratitude to, and trust in, Yahweh runs through the psalm, as in so many of the psalms; we need not dwell on that here. What demands attention is the doctrine of retribution insisted on by the psalmist. While the godly may suffer bad treatment and troubles of various kinds, they are ultimately delivered; but not so the wicked, upon whom destruction comes. That this theory did not square with the facts of life was realized by some of the Sages; but our psalmist persists in the erroneous theory. He holds, further, the view that the ideal

reward for a godly man is a long life, indicating an undeveloped belief in a future life. These points are worth noting, for it is well to recognize that, in some respects, the psalmists, with all their beauty and religious fervour, had not attained to the fullness of truth.

PSALM 35

IN studying this psalm the impression is gained that, while it shows unity of authorship, it was not all written at the same time, and that it deals with two episodes in the life of the writer. This is suggested by the fact that in the first portion of the psalm (*vv.* 1-10) the psalmist is seen to have been the object of physical violence by his enemies which has endangered his life; whereas in the second portion (*vv.* 11-27) he speaks of "false witnesses" who have testified against him, the scene being that of a court of law. The two situations differ the more in that in the former the attacking opponents are, and have been, nothing but inveterate enemies; but in the latter, those who are now opponents had formerly been friends. The psalm gives a vivid picture of the conditions under which God-fearing men often lived in those days; the prophets, too, bear ample witness to this, the rich and powerful often subjecting their less fortunate brethren to cruel and unjust treatment; and there is plenty of evidence to show that in later times, too, the "meek" in the land suffered. Bitter enmity between the orthodox and the hellenistically-minded Jews began to show itself during the third century B.C., allusions to this occur in a number of psalms; it is possible that we have an echo of this here; but religious strife between those faithful to Yahweh and renegades existed in earlier times (see pp. 60 ff). On the other hand, there is the possibility that the original basis of this psalm is a piece of ritual which might be used in serious legal cases. For the Israelite, God was the supreme court of appeal; and cases which were "too hard" (see Deut. 1¹⁷) for ordinary human decision had to be taken to the sanctuary, where the divine verdict was given through the priestly lot. We may be sure that a ritual of some kind developed for this purpose, and, before the lot was cast, the defendant will have had to state his case and make his plea. His language will naturally have been of the kind presented in this psalm. Some of the expressions used suggest that the implied physical violence may be metaphorical, intended to emphasize the spontaneous malice of the accusers. They seek his ruin, though he has done no wrong to them or to any other. They charge him with crime ("witnesses of violence" *v.* 11), and he stands in the mourning garb of the defendant

to make his great appeal (*v.* 13). Yahweh is his only defence and his only hope; Yahweh knows the truth, and will vindicate him (*vv.* 23-27).

That the psalmist speaks as an individual, and not as representing his people, is suggested by most of what is said in the psalm; *v.* 22 is an exception, "those peaceful in the land"; but elsewhere the individual note is clearly sounded.

There is a good deal of textual corruption; the psalm has clearly been worked over; *v.* 18 would suggest for liturgical purposes; but it is not used in the Jewish Liturgy. The corruptions in the text have to some extent interfered with the metre; in its original form it may well have been, in the main, 3 : 2.

David's.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Strive, Yahweh, against them that | fight against them that fight against |
| strive with me, | me. |
| 2. Take hold of shield and buckler, | and rise up for my help; |
| 3. And unsheathe spear ° and battle-axe, ° | to meet my pursuers; |
| Say to my soul, | |
| "Thy help am I", | |
| 4. Let them be ashamed and dishonoured, | |
| That seek after my soul, | |
| Let them be turned backward and | who purpose evil against me; |
| confounded, | 6 ^b with the angel of Yahweh pursuing |
| 5. Let them be as chaff before the wind, | them, |
| 6 ^a Let their way be dark and slippery, | 5 ^b with the angel of Yahweh driving |
| | them on. ° |
| 7. For without a cause have they hidden ° | ° a pit ° have they dug °; |
| their net for me, | |
| 8. ° And their net ° which ° they hid, ° | ° into the pit may they fall °. |
| ° may it catch them °, | may it rejoice in his saving power; |
| 9. But may my soul exult in Yahweh, | "Yahweh, who is like thee, |
| 10. Let all my bones say: | from him that is too strong for him. |
| Who delivereth the afflicted | ° and the poor from his spoiler ! " |
| 11. Witnesses of violence arise, | of that which I know not they accuse |
| | me; |
| 12. They reward me evil | in place of good, |
| ° They bring to ruin ° | my life. |
| 13. But I, when they were sick, | put on sackcloth, |
| I humbled ° my soul, | |
| And my prayer returned to ° my mouth °, | |
| 14. As though for my friend and brother; | |
| I went about as one mourning for a | black and bowed down. |
| mother, | |
| 15. And when I stumbled they rejoiced and | gathered together against me, |
| gathered together, | ° they cry °, and are not silent; |
| ° Like strangers ° whom I know not, | |
| 16. ° Like the godless ° ° they mock | ° they gnash ° their teeth. |
| continually, | |
| 17. Lord, how long wilt thou bear the | rescue my soul ° from them that roar, ° |
| sight ? | the young-lions. |
| Mine only one from the | among a mighty people will I praise |
| 18. ° [I will give thee thanks in the great | thee]. ° |
| congregation, | |
| 19. Let them not rejoice over me that are | ° that wink with their eyes. |
| deceitful enemies, | ° to ° those peaceable in the land; |
| 20. For they speak not peace | 21. they open wide ° their mouth, |
| Words of deceit do they conceive, | our eyes have seen it ! " |
| They say, "Aha, aha, | |

22. Thou sawest it, Yahweh, keep not silence,
 23. Stir up thyself, arouse thee for my cause,
 24. Judge me according to thy righteousness, Yahweh,
 25. Let them not say in their heart,
 26. Let them be ashamed and dishonoured altogether,
 27. Let them shout for joy ° that delight in my triumph,
 28. And let my tongue declare thy righteousness,
- ° be not far from me;
 my God, ° for my plea;
 and let them not rejoice over me.
 "Aha, our desire!"
 have swallowed him up!" ;
 that rejoice at my hurt,
 that magnify themselves against me,
 and let them say continually,
 in the peace of his servant" ;
 thy praise all the day.

Text-critical Notes

3. Read וְסָגַר for וְסָלַח "and stop the way". 5^b and 6^b have been misplaced, as the sense shows. 7. Om. with S שְׁחַת "a pit". Read שְׁחַת for חָצֵם "without a cause". Om. with S לְנַפְשִׁי "for my soul", for the rhythm's sake. 8. Om. תְּבוֹאָהּ שׁוֹאָהּ לְאִיֶּדֶע "let destruction come upon him he knoweth not", a marginal gloss based on Isa. 47¹¹. Read וְרִשְׁתּוֹ for וְרִשְׁתָּם "and his net"; and בְּשׁוֹאָהּ (cp. S) for בְּשׁוֹאָהּ "into destruction"; and יִפְּלוּ for יִפְּלוּ בָּהּ "let him fall into it". These emendations, following largely Duhm and Gunkel, are demanded by the context. 10. Om. with S וְעָנִי "and an afflicted one". 12. Read, with Cheyne, חֲדָשִׁי for חֲדָשִׁי "childlessness". 13. Om. with S בְּצִדּוֹ "with the fast", an explanatory gloss. Read חֲדָשִׁי (lit. "my throat" or "my palate") for חֲדָשִׁי "my bosom". 15. Read בְּנִזְכָּרִים for בְּנִזְכָּרִים "smilers", and חֲרָצִי for חֲרָצִי "they rent asunder". 16. Read בְּחִנְיָם for בְּחִנְיָם "with the profane". Read, with G, לְעֵנִי מְעֹג (lit. "they mock, a mocking") for לְעֵנִי מְעֹג "mockers of a cake". Read חֲרָצִי for חֲרָצִי "to gnash". Om. with S עָלַי "against me", for the rhythm's sake. 17. Read, with Duhm, מִשְׁמַחֲתָם for מִשְׁמַחֲתָם "from their destructions". 18. This verse is wholly out of harmony with the context; it should perhaps come before v. 28. 19. Om. with S שְׂנֵאִי חָצֵם "that hate me without a cause", for the rhythm's sake. 20. Read עַל for עַל "and to". 21. Om. with S עָלַי "against me", for the rhythm's sake. 22. Om. with S חֲרָצִי for the rhythm's sake. 23. Om. with S וְאֶדְרִי, and in 24, וְאֶלְחִי for the same reason. 27. Om. with S וְיִשְׂמְחוּ, "and let them rejoice", for the same reason.

1-8. Doubtless the psalmist's words must not be taken too literally; at the same time, there is no disguising the fact that Yahweh is here conceived of in an unedifying way. The antique conception of him as a warrior-God reappears; in the first instance, Yahweh was thought of as leading the armies of Israel just as he was leader of the heavenly hosts (Yahweh Zebaoth); this idea is here adapted to apply to an individual, and Yahweh is called upon to *strive against* the personal enemies of the psalmist; the term used, *rib*, means originally to fight in battle (e.g., Judg. 11²⁵), and then to contend with words, often in a forensic sense; in this latter the noun is used in our psalm (v. 23). Even if meant metaphorically (which is never elsewhere the case), such words as *Take hold of shield and buckler, and unsheathe spear and battle-*

axe, in reference to Yahweh, are unseemly. In fact, we must not hesitate to recognize that in some of the psalms an undeveloped conception of God is manifested. A toning-down of the representation of Yahweh as a warrior may be discerned in that his *angel* is thought of as *pursuing* and *driving on* those *who purpose evil against* the psalmist. His thought is then turned (9, 10) to the help which he is confident will be afforded him by Yahweh. With the quaint expression, *Let all my bones say, Yahweh, who is like thee . . .*, cp. Ps. 51⁸, what is meant is the entire being or bodily frame, as in Ps. 6². But the psalmist's mind is so filled with thoughts about the maltreatment which he is suffering from his enemies that he soon reverts to that subject. 11-12. The incident referred to in this second part of the psalm would seem to be a different one from that dealt with in the first part. For here the psalmist's enemies charge him with violence, though at one time they had been his friends, for whom he had evinced the deepest sympathy *when they were sick*. Putting on *sackcloth* and *humbling the soul* were the outward signs of mourning (cp. Ps. 30¹¹); to humble the soul was the technical term for fasting, see, e.g., Isa. 58^{3, 5}, cp. Ps. 69¹⁰; *prayer* for them constantly *returned* to his *mouth* (lit. "palate"), i.e., he prayed for them repeatedly as he was wont to pray for a *friend and brother*; and he grieved for them in their distress like *one mourning for a mother, black and bowed down* (cp. Ps. 38⁶), *black* means lit. "squalid", going negligently clad, another outward sign of mourning. In spite of the sympathy thus shown they behave in the most heartless manner to him who had been their friend (15, 16); and the psalmist again (17) calls upon Yahweh to *rescue* him *from them that roar* at him like *young lions*; the expression *Mine only one*, parallel with *my soul*, means the very self (cp. Ps. 22²⁰). 19-20 describe further the cruel and deceitful actions of these enemies, followed, 22-26, by a reiterated prayer to be delivered from them. Finally, (27, 28) in the conviction that deliverance is at hand, the psalmist utters the confident cry that all those who *delight* in his forthcoming *triumph* may *shout for joy*, saying, *Magnified be Yahweh, who hath pleasure in the peace of his servant*.

Religious Teaching

Though it is not to be denied that there are elements in this psalm which fall below the religious standard of most of the psalms, one must recognize that in one respect, at any rate, a true religious spirit is manifested. In spite of grievous wrong suffered by the psalmist, he nowhere expresses the intention, or even the wish, of taking personal revenge upon his enemies and traducers; that he should desire their punishment is natural enough; but this is left wholly in the hands of the Almighty; we recall Rom. 12¹⁹: "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I will repay," cp. Deut. 32³⁵. This wholehearted placing of his cause

in the care of the all-knowing God witnesses to a true sincerity of religious belief. In various other psalms this renouncing of personal revenge, however justified from a worldly point of view, will be found to be present.

PSALM 36

THE personification of Transgression, as here set forth, is unique in the *Psalms*. It is represented as a demon who whispers temptation into the heart of him who is prepared to listen, *i.e.*, the sinner. The reference here is not to atheism, as in Ps. 53¹: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (= Ps. 14¹); it is even worse, for while the existence of God is acknowledged, disregard for his own honour is imputed to him (see, further, the exegetical notes). It is assumed, evidently as the result of observation and experience, that many have succumbed to this kind of temptation; against such the words of indignant protest are uttered.

The psalmist's own conception of, and belief in, Yahweh is proclaimed in words of much beauty.

The contention of some commentators that the psalm is of composite authorship is quite unnecessary when the true nature of the psalm is grasped. The psalm may be assigned to the Greek period.

The metre in the first part of the psalm (*vv.* 2-4) is partly 3 : 2, and partly 3 : 3; the second part is all 3 : 3.

1. *For the Precentor : David's, the Servant of Yahweh.*

- | | | |
|----------|---|---|
| 1 (2). | Oracle of Transgression to the wicked, | |
| | "There is no fear of God | in the depth of ° his heart : ° |
| 2 (3). | ° For he maketh his eyes to overlook it, ° | before his eyes, |
| | | ° so as not to discern the iniquity of his tongue " ° |
| 3 (4). | The words of his mouth are wickedness and deceit, | he hath ceased to deal wisely, to do good, |
| 4 (5). | He deviseth wickedness on his bed ; | |
| | He setteth himself on a way that is not good, | evil he abhorreth not. |
| 5 (6). | Yahweh, unto the heavens is thy love, | thy faithfulness unto the skies ; |
| 6 (7). | Thy righteousness is like the mountains of God, | thy justice ° like the great deep ; ° |
| | Man and beast thou preservest, | 7 (8). Yahweh, how precious is thy love. |
| | ° The children of men come unto thee, ° | in the shadow of thy wings they seek refuge ; |
| 8 (9). | They are sated with the fatness of thine house, | thou makest them to drink of the torrent of thy delights. |
| 9 (10). | For with thee is the well-spring of life, | |
| 10 (11). | Continue thy love to them that know thee, | in thy light shall we see light. |
| 11 (12). | Let not the foot of pride approach me, | and thy righteousness to the upright of heart. |
| 12 (13). | May evil-doers ° be appalled, ° may they fall, | |
| | | nor the hand of the wicked shake me. |
| | | may they be thrust down, and unable to rise. |

Text-critical Notes

1. Read, with some MSS. and the Versions, לִבִּי for לִבִּי, "my heart". 2. Read, with Gunkel, כִּי־הִתְחַלֵּה אֵלָיו בְּעֵינָיו for כִּי־הִתְחַלֵּה עָלָיו עֵינָיו, "for he flattereth unto him with his eyes"; and read מִצְנָה עֵינָיו לְשֹׁנִי for מִצְנָה עֵינָיו לְשֹׁנִי, "to seek his iniquity, to hate" (see, further, the exegetical note). 6. Read אֵלֶיךָ גָּבִהַּ for אֵלֶיךָ רָבָה "the great deep". 7. Read, with Duhm, אֱלֹהִים וְיָ for אֱלֹהִים וְיָ, "God and". 12. Read, with Gunkel, שָׁם for שָׁם "there".

1-2. The interpretation of these two verses is difficult, as is recognized by all commentators. We take the meaning to be as follows: the psalmist represents *Transgression*, personified, as whispering an oracle into the *depth of the heart* of the *wicked* man, just as Yahweh whispered oracles into the heart of his prophets. The words of the oracle then follow; but the Hebrew text here is meaningless; many emendations have been suggested. The R.V. rendering is merely a paraphrastic guess, and does not even represent the corrupt Hebrew text. As it is *Transgression* that gives the oracle, it must be a temptation to the wicked man to do, or think, something evil; and it takes the form of suggesting to him a conception of God which recalls the words of Ps. 50²¹, "Thou thoughtest I was like thee" (cp. also Ps. 94⁷), namely, the blasphemous conception that God takes no more notice of sin than the wicked man does: *There is no fear of God before his (i.e., God's) eyes*, meaning that God is indifferent to the reverence and fear that men should entertain towards him; *For he (i.e., God) maketh his eyes to overlook it (i.e., iniquity)*, so that he does *not discern the iniquity of his tongue (i.e., of the wicked man who hates God)*; in other words: God closes his eyes to iniquity, and takes no notice of the sins that wicked men who hate him commit. The implication is that inasmuch as it is immaterial to the Almighty whether men sin or not, they can sin as much as they like with impunity. That, then, is the oracle which *Transgression* whispers as a temptation to the wicked man. It follows (3, 4) that his words are all evil, and any good to which he may have been inclined is left undone; even as he lies on his bed at nights he *deviseth evil*. In contrast to all this, the psalmist proclaims Yahweh as he really is, and tells of the blessedness of those who come unto him (5-10). First, he speaks of the illimitable sway of the love and faithfulness of Yahweh, reaching unto the heavens (cp. Pss. 57¹⁰, 103¹¹). In the words, *His righteousness is like the mountains of God*, the psalmist is making use of an ancient mythological conception of the divine mountain abode "in the uttermost parts of the north" (Isa. 14¹³¹⁴). The comparison of Yahweh's *righteousness* with the *mountains of God* expresses its reliable, enduring nature. A further mythological *trait* appears in the phrase: *thy justice is like the great deep*; the reference is to the waters under the earth (cp. Gen. 1⁶, 7¹¹, Am. 7⁴), and the comparison is intended to express the unfathomable depth of Yahweh's justice. So that these

two verses (5, 6) extol the divine attributes of love, faithfulness, righteousness, and justice, as filling the heavens above, the earth beneath, and the waters under the earth; a clear mark of prophetic influence. Further, special stress is laid on Yahweh's love; *precious*, because through it both *man and beast* are preserved (8). For the thought of the *refuge* to be sought under the *shadow of Yahweh's wings* cp. Pss. 57¹, 61⁴, 91⁴. A difficulty is presented in the words: *They are satisfied with the fatness of thine house*. This is usually interpreted as referring to the sacrificial meals enjoyed in the temple by the worshippers of Yahweh; but inasmuch as the subject, *They*, includes *the children of men* in general, and not only the worshippers of Yahweh, this interpretation is hardly satisfactory; moreover, the parallel clause, *thou makest them to drink of the river of thy delights*, cannot well refer to the drink enjoyed during the sacrificial meals. Gunkel would read the *fatness of thy goodness*, for which there is much to be said; but, like the other expression, it is otherwise unknown; we have, therefore, followed the Hebrew text as it stands, unsatisfactory though it is. With the parallel between *life* and *light* (9), cp. Ps. 56¹³, Job 33³⁰. A prayer for the continuance of Yahweh's *love to them that know him* (10) is appropriately added; and the psalmist concludes with a petition that he may be defended against the approach of wickedness which overwhelms the evil-doers.

Religious Teaching

This psalm is not without interest from the point of view of the Jewish doctrine of sin. It teaches that men are under the influence of evil spiritual powers just as they are under the influence of God. That is to say, evil is external to man. On the other hand, since it is "the wicked man" who is open to the evil influence, the implication is that evil is already present in him, which is the reason for his succumbing to temptation (cp. Gen. 6⁵). The problem of sin, here only adumbrated, exercised the minds of Jewish thinkers in an increasing degree during the post-exilic period; and it centred, as it was bound to do, on the question of the origin of sin. If sin is external to man, who or what is it that causes it? If, on the other hand, sin is innate in man, how did it come to be so? The attempted answers to these questions, put forth by Jewish thinkers, are of much interest; we can but briefly indicate them, as the general subject of the origin of sin and its prevalence is far too large a one to enter upon here. The theories, or dogmas, as the case may be, the evidence for which, whether in the Bible or in post-Biblical Jewish literature, is abundant, are the following:

(1). The theory, based on ancient mythology, that fallen angels brought sin into the world.

- (2). The dogma of the Fall ; the danger of dualistic conceptions was simply ignored.
- (3). The dogma of the creation of good and evil tendencies in man, the two *Yetzers*.
- (4). The theory that sin originated in man, and was of his making.
- (5). The theory that God created evil.

So far as our psalm is concerned, none of these theories or dogmas come into consideration ; the existence of sin is taken for granted without seeking to explain its origin. We are thus led to surmise that the psalmist, all unconsciously, was influenced by Persian Dualism ; but that he did not realize the danger to monotheistic belief which this involved.

PSALM 37

WE have here another acrostic psalm, which, with one exception, differs from the others of this character in that each letter of the Hebrew alphabet begins alternate lines, two lines going to each letter. Similar to this are Pss. 9, 10, which constitute a single psalm. Our psalm belongs to the Wisdom type ; each couplet is, as a rule, self-contained, and the style is that with which we are familiar in the book of *Proverbs*. The happy lot of the righteous is again and again contrasted with that of the wicked, so that the central theme of the psalm is the doctrine of retribution. That the realities of life did not support the optimistic outlook of the Sage did not trouble him ; he insists that, in spite of appearances, the upright enjoy prosperity, the godless the reverse. This conviction is based on an unshakeable trust in divine providence ; according to him, if the godly suffered, and the wicked prospered, that was merely temporary ; a little patience, and the final outcome will be seen. The inordinate length of the psalm, and its repetitions, are due to its artificial alphabetical construction.

As a product of the Wisdom Literature, the psalm belongs, in all probability, to the third century B.C.

The metre is for the most part 3 : 3 ; but some variations occur.

David's.

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1 N. | Be not enraged because of evil-doers,
° and ° be not envious
of workers of unrighteousness ; |
| 2. | For like grass do they speedily
wither, and fade away like the green herb. |
| 3 J. | Trust in Yahweh, and do good, be the land thy dwelling, fidelity thy
pasture ; |
| 4. | And delight thee in Yahweh,
that he may grant unto thee
the requests of thine heart ; |

- 5 J. Commit thy way unto Yahweh, and trust him, and he will do it,
 6. And he will bring forth thy righteousness as light, and thy rectitude as the noon-day.
- 7 7. Be still before Yahweh, and wait patiently for him.
 Be not angered at him whose way doth prosper, at the man who performeth evil-devices.
- 8 7. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath,
 Be not angered (it leadeth) only to evil-doing ;
9. For evil-doers will be cut off, but they that wait on Yahweh shall inherit the land.
- 10 J. Yet a little, and the wicked is no more, thou wilt consider his place, but he is no more.
11. The meek shall inherit the land, and shall delight them in abundance of peace.
- 12 J. The wicked plotteth against the righteous, and gnasheth against him his teeth.
13. The Lord doth laugh at him, for he seeth his day is coming.
- 14 7. The wicked have drawn the sword, they have bent their bow, To cut down the afflicted, to slay the upright of life.
15. Their sword shall enter their heart, and their bows shall be broken.
- 16 7. Better is a little that the righteous hath than ° great ° ° wealth ° of the wicked.
17. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken, but Yahweh upholdeth the righteous ;
- 18 7. He knoweth the days of the perfect, and their inheritance abideth for ever ;
19. They shall not be ashamed in the evil time, and in the days of want they shall be sated ;
- 20 7. But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of Yahweh, ° Like the burning of furnaces ° shall they vanish like smoke. °
- 21 7. The wicked borroweth, and repayeth not, but the righteous is gracious, and giveth.
22. For they whom he blesseth shall inherit the land, but they whom he curseth shall be cut off.
- 23 7. From Yahweh are the steps of man, ° he establisheth him in whose way ° he delighteth ;
24. Though he fall he shall not be cast headlong, for Yahweh upholdeth his hand.
- 25 7. I have been both young and old, but have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his seed begging for food ;
26. He is ever gracious and lendeth, and his seed ° shall be ° for a blessing.
- 27 7. Depart from evil, and do good, and dwell ° in the land ° for ever ;
28. For Yahweh is a lover of justice, and will not forsake his godly ones.
- 29 7. ° The godless ° ° shall be destroyed ° and the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.
- 30 7. The righteous shall inherit the land, and shall dwell thereon for ever.
31. The mouth of the righteous murmureth wisdom, and his tongue discourseth justice ;
- 32 7. The law of his God is in his heart, his footsteps ° shall not totter. °
33. The wicked spieth upon the righteous, and seeketh to slay him ;
- 34 7. But Yahweh will not abandon him to his power, nor condemn him when he stands in the judgement.
- 35 7. Wait for Yahweh, and keep his way, And he will exalt thee to inherit the land ; when the wicked are cut off thou shalt see it.
36. I saw the wicked ° exultant, ° ° and raising himself up like the cedars of Lebanon ° ;
37. ° I passed by, ° and behold, he was not, I sought him, but he was not to be found.

- 37 ^ש. Keep ° integrity, ° ° and foster up-
rightness,
38. But transgressors shall be destroyed
altogether,
39 ^ת. The salvation of the righteous is
from Yahweh,
40. And Yahweh doth help them and
deliver them
- for the latter end ° of the upright ° is
peace;
the end of the wicked be cut short.
their refuge in the time of trouble;
° from the wicked °; for they trust in
him.

Text-critical Notes

1. Add ^ל with many MSS. and the Versions. 9. Om. ^{וְהָיָה} for the rhythm's sake. 14. Om. ^{וְהָיָה} for the rhythm's sake. 16. Read ^{רַב} for ^{רַבִּים}, "many" (in reference to "the wicked"). Read ^{מִהַבִּיחַ} for ^{מִהַבִּיחַ}, "than the abundance". 18. Om. ^{יְהוָה} for the rhythm's sake. 20. Read, with Baethgen, ^{פִּיחָד פְּרִים} for ^{פִּיחָד פְּרִים}, "like the preciousness of lambs". Om. the second ^{פִּלִּי}. 23. Read, with Duhm, ^{בְּיָמֵי וְדָרְכּוֹ} for ^{בְּיָמֵי וְדָרְכּוֹ}, "be ye established and his way". 26. Add ^{וְהָיָה} for the rhythm's sake. 27. Add ^{בְּאֶרֶץ} for the rhythm's sake. 28. Add, with G, ^{עֲוִלִים}. Read, with G, ^{נִשְׁמְרֵי} for ^{נִשְׁמְרֵי}, "they shall be preserved". 31. For the fem. sing. with the subject in the plur. (^{תִּמְצֵד וְשָׁרִיר}) see GK. 145^k. 35. Read, with Duhm (cp. G), ^{עֲלִיץ}, "ruthless". Read, with G, ^{יִמְהַעֲלֶה} for ^{יִמְהַעֲלֶה}, "and uncovering himself like a green native (tree)". 36. Read, with the Versions, ^{וַיַּעֲבֹר} for ^{וַיַּעֲבֹר}, "and he passed by". 37. Read, with the Versions, ^{תָּם} and ^{יָשָׁר}, nouns, in place of the adjectives ^{תָּם}, "perfect", and ^{יָשָׁר}, "upright"; and read ^{תִּרְעָה} for ^{תִּרְעָה}, "and observe". Read, with Gunkel, ^{לְאִישׁ יָשָׁר}, "for a man". 40. Om. ^{וַיַּלְמֵם} and ^{וַיִּשְׁעֵם}, "he delivereth them and saveth them", which overload the line.

Most of the sayings of which the psalm is composed are of such a straightforward and simple character that not much in the way of exegesis is called for. Here and there a few comments may be offered; but, on the whole, the thoughts are expressed with such transparent simplicity that their meaning is self-evident.

1-11. The psalm opens abruptly with an exhortation to the God-fearing *not to be enraged*, lit. "heated" with anger, nor *envious*, because they see evil-doers going unpunished and living in prosperity (cp. Prov. 24¹⁹), for this is but transient (cp. Prov. 24^{20, 22}); very soon *workers of unrighteousness* will be seen to *wither like grass, and fade away like the green herb* (cp. Ps. 92⁷). The godly man has but to possess his soul in patience, and he will see the wicked *cut off*. The great requisite is to *Trust in Yahweh, and do good* (cp. Prov. 3⁵); he will vindicate those who *commit their way* to him, lit. "roll" their way upon Yahweh (cp. Prov. 16³), the expression occurs also in Ps. 22⁸, and contains the thought of whole-hearted flinging of oneself upon God, knowing that his will prevails. So that, even though the wicked prosper and the godly suffer, one must *be still before Yahweh, i.e., submit in silence* to what he ordains, and it will soon be seen that *the wicked is no more* (cp. Job 24²⁴, see further the section on Religious Teaching to Ps. 44), but that *the meek shall inherit the land* (cp. Matth. 5⁵). The psalmist is here thinking of the wealthy landowners who grind down their poverty-stricken dependents; these latter are encouraged by the prospect

that ultimately it is they who will possess the land. This is insisted on several times (*vv.* 22, 27, 29, 34). This, then, constitutes the main theme of the psalm, as so often in the Wisdom Literature; in spite of appearances, the ungodly, who in their pride and prosperity oppress the righteous, will soon be humiliated; but they who trust in Yahweh will enjoy permanent peace and quietude. In one form or another this is reiterated all through the psalm.

12-24. The wickedness of the ungodly is intensified by their bitter enmity *towards the righteous*; this is manifested not only by their plotting, *i.e.*, devising evil machinations, but also by actual attempts on the lives of the righteous; they *draw the sword, bend, lit. "tread", the bow*, and seek to *slay the upright of life*, *lit. "of way"* (cp. Ps. 7¹⁰); retribution, however, soon follows, and as the wicked intended, so shall it be done unto them (15); so that their wealth, which is their all in all, is vain, and becomes of less value even than the *little* possessed by their victims: *Better is a little that the righteous hath than great wealth of the wicked*; this thought is suggested by Prov. 15¹⁶, 16⁸; the rendering is that of the Versions, which is preferable to that of the Hebrew: ". . . than the wealth of many wicked". In contrast to this, the righteous are upheld by Yahweh, who will see to it that *they shall not be ashamed in the evil time, and in the days of want they shall be sated*. In *v.* 20 there is an obvious corruption in the Hebrew text; for the suggested emendation, see the text-critical note. A further count against the wicked man is that *he borroweth, and repayeth not*, while the righteous man is *gracious, and giveth* spontaneously; therefore he has the authority which makes his words effective, so that they whom he blesses *inherit the land*, and they whom he curses *are cut off*.

25-40. Here the psalmist gives what has been his experience through a long life: *I have been both young and old, but have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging for food*; and he proceeds to repeat the main theme of the psalm, interspersed with exhortations to the righteous to persevere in the right way, and certifying them that *Yahweh doth help them and deliver them from the wicked; for they trust in him*.

Religious Teaching

This is so abundantly and clearly set forth throughout, that further remarks are not called for. The psalmist's teaching on retribution has been referred to; here it may merely be added that his point of view on the subject, which is an erroneous one, is precisely the same as that of Job's friends; Job himself is at pains to refute it.

PSALM 38

THERE is probably no psalm, with the one exception of the fifty-first, which is of such a deeply penitential character as this; and it is naturally numbered among the seven penitential psalms of the Church. It is possible that part of it at any rate, may have been, as Mowinckel contends, in the nature of a counteraction to a magical spell cast upon the psalmist by his enemies. But, in the main, it is the outpouring of one suffering grievous sickness, and who is convinced that this is a punishment inflicted upon him because of sin. This transgression he confesses with unflinching candour, expressing his contrition in words of poignant feeling. His friends, seeing in him one struck down by the hand of God, and therefore guilty of some secret sin, turn from him, and become his enemies; their reviling he submits to in silence. His one recourse is to plead with Yahweh for his help.

Like Ps. 37, this psalm belongs, in all probability, to the Greek period. It shows numerous traces of dependence on earlier writings.

The metre, with few exceptions, is 3 : 3.

There is so much in this psalm which is reminiscent of Babylonian psalms of a similar type, that it will not be out of place if we give some extracts from one of these. It is a psalm addressed to the goddess Ishtar by a penitent, who is suffering from sickness, and feels that this is inflicted as a punishment for sin. It is far too long to quote in full, but the following extracts will sufficiently illustrate its nature :—¹

“ I call upon thee,

Have regard unto me, O my goddess,
Look upon me in mercy,
O tell thou forth my forgiveness,
The forgiveness of my careworn body,
The forgiveness of my sickly heart,
The forgiveness of mine innermost self,
I moan like a dove,
I am bowed down,
With pain and travail
I cry to thee, yea, to thee,
Pardon my guilt, my transgression,
Forget my ill-doing,
Loosen my bands,
Guide my footsteps,

Let me tread down mine enemies,
They that are wrathful against me cast
down,
My prayer and my supplication,
May thine abundant mercy

I, thy wretched, pitiful, and suffering
servant ;

give heed to my supplication ;
hearken unto my prayer.
O may thy heart be softened,—
full of discomfort and restlessness,
full of tears and sighs,
full of discomfort and restlessness . . .
day and night,
and weep in bitterness ;
is my spirit tormented . . .
release me from the spell ;
my misdeeds and my sin,
receive my supplication ;
and grant me freedom ;
that I may walk among the living in
gladness . . .
as upon the ground ;

let them grovel at my feet.
let them come unto thee,
abide on me.”

1. *A Psalm. David's. To Commemorate.*

1 (2). Yahweh, punish me not in thy ° and in thy fierce-anger ° chasten me
wrath, not.

¹ They are taken from the German translations of the original by Jastrow, *Die Religion Babylonien und Assyrien*, ii. 66 ff. (1912), and Gressmann, *Altorientalische Texte zum Alten Testament*, pp. 257 ff. (1926).

- 2 (3). For thine arrows pierce me, and thine hand ° is heavy ° upon me.
 3 (4). There is no soundness in my flesh,
 because of thine indignation,
 nor ° wholeness ° in my bones,
 because of my sin.
- 4 (5). For mine iniquities are gone over my head, like a ° burden, they are too heavy for me.
 5 (6). My wounds stink, they fester, because of my foolishness.
 6 (7). I am bowed down and prostrated greatly,
 7 (8). For my loins are full of burning, all the day I go about mourning;
 8 (9). I am faint and greatly bruised, and there is no soundness in my flesh.
 9 (10). O Lord, before thee is all my I cry out for the groaning of my heart.
 longing, and my sighing is not hid from thee.
- 10 (11). My heart throbberth,
 my strength hath failed me,
 the light of mine eyes ° is not with me.
- 11 (12). My lovers ° draw off from before me, and my neighbours stand afar off,
 12 (13). And they lay snares, ° they utter destructive-things,
 13 (14). And as for me, I am like a deaf man ° that heareth not, ° and like a dumb man that openeth not his mouth;
 14 (15). Yea, I am like a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth there are no reproofs;
 15 (16). But in thee do I hope, Yahweh, thou wilt make answer, ° my God;
 16 (17). ° I said: "Lest they rejoice against me, and ° boast over ° me when my foot slippeth;
 17 (18). For I am on the verge of giving way, for my pain is continually with me;
 18 (19). ° Mine iniquity I confess, I am harassed because of my sin.
- 19 (20). And mine enemies assail me and they that hate me falsely are ° without cause, ° many;
 20 (21). They render me evil instead of good,
 They are mine enemies because I follow after good.
- 21 (22). Forsake me not, Yahweh, my God, be not far from me,
 22 (23). Haste thee to help me,
 O Lord, my salvation."

Text-critical Notes

1. Read, with many MSS. and the Versions, וְאֵל-בְּחִמָּהּ for וּבְחִמָּהּ.
 2. Read, with Duhm, וְהִתְחַר for וְהִתְחַר. 3. Read, with Duhm, שָׁלֹם for שָׁלוֹם, a better parallel to "soundness". 4. Om. כָּבֵד, "heavy", for the rhythm's sake.
 10. Om., with G, גַּם-הֵם, "even they". 11. Read נִגְשׁוּ for נִגְשׁוּ for וְרָעִי בְּנִגְדִי, "and my friends stand aloof from my stroke (plague)", which overloads the line; the same verb occurs in the next half-line. 12. Om. as overloading the line וְרָעִי בְּנִגְדִי, "they that seek after my soul and they that seek my hurt". 13. Read לֹא אֶשְׁמַע for לֹא אֶשְׁמַע, "I hear not". 15. Om. הִתְחַר for the rhythm's sake. 16. Om. כִּי, "for". Read וְנִגְדִי for וְנִגְדִי.
 18. Om. כִּי, "for". 19. Read הֵם for הֵם, "are living".

For the title, see p. 15.

1. Self-condemnation is implicit in the opening words of the psalm. The psalmist, quoting Ps. 61, feels that he has aroused the wrath of Yahweh, and deserves punishment, because of his sins; so that the prayer that this may be averted is in itself a confession. This, there-

upon, receives explicit expression, and in 3-10 the penitent, in acknowledging his sins, describes the scourge of which they are the cause. For the metaphorical sense of the *arrows* of the Almighty cp. Job 6⁴; and for that of Yahweh's hand resting heavily on the sinner cp. Pss. 32⁴, 39¹⁰; they are the marks of his *indignation*, to which is attributed the malady from which the penitent is suffering: there is no *soundness* in his flesh (possibly a reminiscence of Isa. 1⁶), and no *wholeness* in his *bones*. Flesh and bones constitute the material part of the human body (cp. Lk. 24³⁹), the spirit the intangible part; it will be noticed that blood, the seat of life, is not mentioned. A fuller confession then follows: *mine iniquities are gone over my head, i.e.*, they have overwhelmed him like a flood of waters (cp. Pss. 69^{2, 15}, 124⁴), and with a sudden change of metaphor he continues: *like a burden, they are too heavy for me*; the very incongruity in this change of metaphor is full of significance, for it tells of the entirely natural variability of thought in the troubled mind of a sufferer; first the rushing flood of sins, then the burden of them; what a realistic picture these two wholly incompatible ideas present of the mental condition of one who, because of his sins, is sunk in the sea of despair, and bowed down with their weight! Then the penitent goes on to describe in fuller detail the nature of his malady; from what is said the impression is gained that it was some form of leprosy from which he was suffering; his *wounds stink* and *fester* (again cp. Isa. 1⁶), *because of his foolishness*, synonymous with sin (cp. Ps. 69⁵); but he is not on a bed of sickness, for he *goeth about all the day mourning* (cp. Ps. 42⁹), lit. "black". The description of the sickness is followed (9, 10) by some very touching words which reveal the depth of the realization of the psalmist's relationship with God; such an opening of the heart, as is here set forth, is an inspiration of enduring value: *O Lord, before thee is all my longing, and my sighing is not hid from thee*; only where there is the deepest confidence and trust in the divine Friend can one say: *My heart throbberth, my strength hath failed me, the light of mine eye is not with me*, in the full conviction that divine sympathy will be forthcoming; it is at the same time an implicit appeal for mercy. 11-16. This need for help from on high is the more urgently felt because the sufferer's *lovers* and *neighbours* will have nothing to do with him; *they draw off from before me, and stand afar off*; believing him to be stricken of God they turn from him as one to be avoided (cp. Ps. 88¹⁸, and especially Isa. 53^{3, 4}). But more, these friends, as they had once been, now maltreat him; they have become his enemies, *they lay snares* (cp. Ps. 141⁹), *they utter destructive-things*, a very strong expression, meaning that what they say is intended to result in his destruction (cp. Ps. 52²), and *they meditate evil-devices all the day, i.e.*, their machinations are done in secret so that they may assail him unawares (cp. Ps. 35²⁰). In face of all this the victim simply takes no

notice, he is *like a deaf man that heareth not, and like a dumb man that openeth not his mouth* (cp. Isa. 53⁷), and makes *no replies*, lit. "reproofs", i.e., he does not attempt to refute their lying words, for there is one in whom he trusts, *But in thee do I hope, Yahweh*. Finally (17-22) the penitent in his dire distress, again makes his confession: *Mine iniquity I confess, I am harassed because of my sin*; let his enemies do their worst, he has done what he ought to do, and is following after what is good; therefore he can pray in certitude that his prayer will be heard: *For-sake me not, Yahweh, my God, be not far from me* (cp. Pss. 22^{11,19}, 35²²), *Haste thee to help me, O Lord, my salvation* (cp. Pss. 40¹³, 27¹).

As in some other instances, the religious teaching of this psalm is necessarily dealt with in the exegetical notes.

PSALM 39

IN order to appreciate the essential significance of this psalm attention must be directed first to v. 10, which gives the key to the whole of it: "Take away from me thy stroke, through the smiting of thine hand I am perishing". Sickness has overtaken the sufferer, and it is of so severe a character that he fears a fatal outcome. As in the case of the preceding psalm, here too, the stricken one realizes that his suffering is a divine visitation, a punishment for sin; hence the primary duty of making confession: "From all my transgressions deliver me". That puts him in the fitting condition to appeal to God: "Hear my prayer, give ear to my cry". The psalm is, therefore, in the fullest sense, of a penitential character, though at first sight it does not appear to be so, and is, therefore, not reckoned among the penitential psalms. Now, what is particularly noteworthy in this psalm is that the nature of the sin of which the penitent has been guilty is indicated in the clearest manner. In all the other penitential psalms, where there is also a full recognition and confession of sin, the actual nature of what has been done amiss is not indicated. In this case it is different. The stroke of sickness which had fallen upon him was not, at first, recognized by the sufferer as a just retribution for sin, and he had been guilty of adopting an attitude towards God of a character somewhat similar to that urged upon Job by his wife: "Dost thou still hold fast thine integrity? Renounce God, and die!" (Job 2⁹). In the bitterness of spirit engendered by long-drawn suffering, impatience and irritability had possessed him, and he had sinned with his tongue by speaking against God, hence the opening words of the psalm which are at once a confession of past sin, and a resolution of amendment: "I said, I will take heed

unto my words, that I sin not with my tongue", followed by a detailed confession of the nature of his sin (see, further, the exegetical notes).

The date of the psalm, like that of the preceding one, is the third century.

The metre is somewhat variable, which is, however, fully to be accounted for by the troubled state of mind of the writer.

1. *For the Precentor. Jeduthun's. A Psalm. David's.*
- 1 (2). I said, I will take heed unto ° my words, ° that I sin not with my tongue ;
° I will put ° to my mouth a bridle ° because of ° the wicked before me ;
- 2 (3). I was dumb in silence,
I held my peace from what was good.
° But my feelings ° were stirred,
- 3 (4). my heart was hot within me,
while I mused the fire kindled,
I spake with my tongue :
- 4 (5). " Let me know, Yahweh, mine end, and the number of my days, what it is,
that I may see how transient I am ;
- 5 (6). Behold, handbreadths
hast thou made my days,
and my life is as nought before thee ;
Surely as ° a vapour ° doth every man stand. Selah. 6 (7). surely ° as a shadow ° man doth
° Riches ° he gathereth, but knoweth not who will gather them."
- 7 (8). And now, what is ° my hope °, O Lord ? my waiting is for thee ;
- 8 (9). From all my transgressions deliver me, the reproach of the foolish make me not.
- 9 (10). I am dumb, and open not my mouth, for thou didst do it ;
- 10 (11). Take away from me thy stroke, ° through the smiting ° of thine hand I am perishing ;
- 11 (12). With rebukes for iniquity thou chastenest man ;
Thou destroyest like a moth ° his beauty, ° surely a vain thing, is every man. Selah.
- 12 (13). Hear my prayer, °
Give ear to my cry,
Be not deaf to my weeping ;
For a stranger am I with thee,
A sojourner like all my fathers.
- 13 (14). ° Look away ° from me that I may be cheered, before I go hence and am no more.

Text-critical Notes

1. Read **דִּבְרֵי**, as demanded by the context, for **דִּבְרֵי**, "my ways". Read, with G, **אֶשְׁמְרָה** for **אֶשְׁמְרָה**, "I will take heed", or "keep", repeated from the previous line. Read **בְּעֶבְרִי** for **בְּעֶזֶר**, "while". 2. Read, with Gunkel, **וּבְדָבְדִּי**, lit. "but my liver" (the seat of the feelings, according to ancient Hebrew thought), as a better parallel to **לִבִּי**, "my heart", for **וּבְחֶבְרִי**, "but my pain". 5. Read, with S, **כָּל־בָּרֶךְ** for **כָּל־בָּרֶךְ**, "every vapour", and 6. **בְּצֶלֶם** for **בְּ**, "in a shadow". Read **אֲדַחֲחֵם** for **אֲדַחֲחֵם**, "surely they are disquieted in vain". 7. Read, with GS, **מִתְקַוֶּה לִּי** for **מִתְקַוֶּה לִּי**, "what wait I for?" 10. Read, with G, **מִתְקַוֶּה לִּי**, lit. "through the strength of", for **מִתְקַוֶּה לִּי**, "through the conflict of". 11. Read, with some MSS. **הַמִּדְּוָה** for **הַמִּדְּוָה**, "his delight". 12. Om., with G, **יְהוָה**, "Yahweh". 13. Read **שֶׁעָה** for **הַשֶּׁעָה**, lit. "besmear (thine eyes)" cp. Isa. 6¹⁰.

For the title, see p. 15.

1-6. With his conscience overburdened with the sense of sin the penitent plunges at once into a full acknowledgement of the nature of the sin of which he has been guilty: *I said, I will take heed unto my words, that I sin not with my tongue.* The general content of the psalm shows that this sinning with the tongue had been the uttering of *words* displeasing to the Almighty. The Hebrew text has "ways" instead of *words*, but the context, with the mention of *tongue* and *mouth*, shows that "words" must have been the original reading; the similarity between the two (see text-critical note) easily accounts for the copyist's error. The nature of these *words* is described later; but this is preceded by a passage which is a little difficult; it may, however, be explained thus: the opening word of the psalm, "I said", applies to the whole of v. 1, viz., *I said, I will take heed unto my words . . . , (I said) I will put to my mouth a bridle . . .*; so that both clauses refer to the past; they describe the right state of mind to which the psalmist had been brought, while implicitly recalling the prior evil state of his mind. What he had first said would appear to have been doubting of divine justice, in permitting the *wicked* to prosper; therefore, having come to a better frame of mind, he had said, *I will put a bridle to my mouth because of the wicked before me*, even though this resulted in *holding his peace from what was good*. The passage, it must be confessed, is somewhat involved; but this is easily accounted for when one considers the psalmist's varying emotions.

Then the penitent reverts to his confession with which he began the psalm; he now, therefore, describes what he had been guilty of in fuller detail: *But my feelings* (lit. "my liver") *were stirred*; the context demands this emendation; the Hebrew text has "my pain" (the two words are again somewhat similar, see text-critical note); *my heart was hot within me*, in the sense of being angry; both expressions are extremely rare; *while I mused the fire kindled*, lit. "in my meditation", in late Hebrew the verb means also "to argue", and the noun here may well have the sense of mental argument. Weary, impatient, and irritable through much suffering, the sick man asks himself what is the meaning of it all; why is he suffering? What has he done to deserve it? Why does God not help him? Does God care? Is life worth living? The inner struggle becomes intolerable, and rage bursts forth, *the fire kindled*; then, in desperation he speaks *with his tongue*, and in the words then uttered lay the essence of his sin (vv. 4, 5). At first sight there does not seem to be anything particularly reprehensible in those words; but the evil of them lies in what they imply. *Let me know, Yahweh, mine end, and the number of my days, what it is . . .*: that is an entirely unseemly request, and reveals an altogether wrong spirit; the ways of divine providence are not for man to know. Then, the desire to go hence, which is implied, is an evil one because it

points to a refusal to trust in God ; moreover, it manifests an indifference to relationship with God, for in death there is no remembrance of him (Ps. 6⁵). Further, to say that *my life* (i.e., duration of life) *is as nought before thee* is to ignore a great truth (see Ps. 90⁴). And, finally, to depreciate man by speaking of him as a *vapour*, and a *shadow*, is an insult to God who made man "in his own image" (Gen. 1²⁷). Thus, the whole passage betrays a spirit which in its attitude towards God is deplorable. But that is all in the past. The psalmist then turns to the present : 7, *And now, what is my hope, O Lord? my waiting is for thee* ; 8, and he prays to be delivered from all his *transgressions* which he has just recalled. The *foolish* would naturally *reproach* him for his conversion to God. 9-11. In humble submission, and in striking contrast to his former wrong-headed utterances, he is now *dumb* before God, and *openeth not his mouth* ; for he has come to understand that his suffering was God's doing, and that his chastening was the just punishment for his *iniquities*. He speaks of man as a *vain thing* (it is the same word as that for "vapour") in a very different spirit now ; not as contemptible, but as powerless under the hand of God. 12, 13. His one recourse is to *prayer*, and in fitting humility he speaks of himself as a *stranger* in the sight of God, and in his deep sense of unworthiness prays that God may *look away from him*, i.e., in his sinfulness, and thus be cheered before he *goes hence and is no more*.

In this psalm, again, the religious teaching has been dealt with in the preceding notes.

PSALM 40

THAT we have here two independent psalms which have been combined would be obvious, even if we did not know that one of them occurs elsewhere as Ps. 70. The difference in the type of psalm as well as in subject-matter between the two parts (1-11 and 13-17) shows that they do not belong together (on v. 12 see exegetical note). The former is an expression of gratitude for recovery from sickness (see v. 2), while the other is a prayer to be delivered from enemies. In each it is an individual who writes in his own name ; that he represents the community as some commentators hold, is an untenable view in face of what is said in vv. 9-11 in the first psalm and in v. 17 in the other. Both psalms are post-exilic, the former because of the repudiation of sacrifices (on this see the exegetical notes on v. 6), and because of what is said about the Law ; the latter because the enemies are contrasted with "those that seek thee" (v. 16), i.e., the enemies are hellenistic Jews.

The metre is mostly 3 : 2, but there are some variations from this,

which may, however, be due to textual corruption occurring here and there.

For the Precentor : David's. A Psalm.

1. (2). I waited patiently for Yahweh, and he inclined unto me,
 ° [With my voice unto him I called], ° and he heard my cry.
- 2 (3). He brought me up from the pit of
 ° Sheol, ° from the miry clay ;
 He set my feet upon a rock, making firm my footsteps ;
- 3 (4). And he put in my mouth
 a new song,
 a hymn-of-praise to our God ;
- 4 (5). Many saw it and feared, and trusted in Yahweh.
- 5 (6). Blessed is the man who maketh Yahweh his trust,
 And turneth not unto vain things, falling away to falsehood.
- 6 (7). Many hast thou wrought ° for us, Yahweh, ° of thy wondrous-works,
 And thy purposes to us-ward,— there is none to compare with thee ;
 Should I declare and speak (of them), they would be too many to number.
- 6* (7*). Sacrifice and meal-offering thou 6° (7°). Whole burnt-offering and ° sin-
 desirest not, offering ° thou askest not ;
- 6^b (7^b). ° Mine ears hast thou perfected for 7 (8). then said I, lo, I come—
 me ° ;
 In the roll of the book it is written °— 8 (9). to do thy will ° I delight,
- 9 (10). Thy Law is within my heart.
 I proclaim thy righteousness
 in the great assembly ;
 Behold, my lips
 I do not restrain,
 Yahweh, thou knowest ;
- 10 (11). Thy righteousness I hide not
 within my heart,
 Thy faithfulness and succour I declare ;
 I do not conceal thy lovingkindness
 and mercy before the great assembly.
- 11 (12). Thou, Yahweh, wilt not withhold thy tender-mercies from me ;
 Thy love and thy truth
 Will ever preserve me.

Text-critical Notes

1. A tentative addition: קָוִי לִי אֱלֹהֵי צַדִּיקָתִי, cp. Ps. 77¹, to supply what seems to have fallen out of the text. 2. Read, with Gressmann, שִׁמּוּל for שִׁמּוֹן, "tumult". 5. Read, with most commentators, אַתָּה for אַתָּה, "thou". Om. אֱלֹהֵי as overloading the half-line. 6°. Read חַטָּאת for חַטָּאת, "sin". 6^b. Read אֶזְכֹּר לִי עָמָדִי (cp. G *oria de cathrismo* μολ), cp. Ps. 138⁸, for לִי עָמָדִי לִי, "ears hast thou dug for me". 7. Om. עָמָד, "of me". 8. Om. אֱלֹהֵי as overloading the line.

1, 2. Expressive of the dominating emotion of the psalmist's heart, that of gratitude, the psalm begins with the recognition of Yahweh's response to him who *waited patiently* for him: *He inclined unto me, and he heard my cry*. The words in brackets are no part of the text; they are merely an attempt to supply what may have stood in the text originally; that some words have fallen out seems likely as they are wanted for the balance of the line. The psalmist then proceeds to state what it was that called forth his gratitude. This is expressed in metaphorical language; through God's mercy he has recovered from a severe sickness which had brought him near to death. *He brought me*

up from the pit of Sheol; the emendation *Sheol* is demanded because the Hebrew reads, "the pit of noise", or "tumult" (see text-critical note), which does not give adequate sense. For the pit as synonymous with *Sheol*, see Pss. 30³, 88³⁻⁵ Isa. 14¹⁵; the thought of the pit as being of *miry clay* occurs also in Ps. 69^{14, 15}. That the psalmist is referring to recovery from sickness is evident, as may be seen from the parallel passage Ps. 30^{2, 3}, where the sufferer is "healed" by Yahweh, and "brought up from Sheol", see also Ps. 116¹⁻³. His recovery is described metaphorically as having his *feet set upon a rock* (cp. Ps. 27⁵), and as having his *footsteps made firm* (cp. Ps. 37²³), whereby he triumphantly proclaims the completeness of his recovery. 3. Very significant is the way in which the psalmist ascribes to divine inspiration the psalm which he composes: *And he put in my mouth a new song, a hymn-of-praise to our God*; it is a *new song* (cp. Pss. 33³, 96¹), for in his grateful happiness it is insufficient for him to sing one of the older psalms of thanksgiving; he must utter, through divine prompting, the feelings of his own heart. He sings it in the sanctuary among his fellow-worshippers, and many of those who were watching him *feared*, i.e., were filled with reverential awe, and *trusted in Yahweh*; faith is strengthened in others by this manifest proof of God's power and loving-kindness. 4. This leads the psalmist to insist on how *Blessed is the man who maketh Yahweh his trust*, in contrast to idol-worshippers; the expressions here used are a little difficult; the expression "to turn unto" is used in a technical sense of turning unto idols in Lev. 19⁴, Deut. 31^{18, 20} the word rendered "vain things" (*ṛhābīm*) does not mean "proud" or "arrogant" here; it is the plural of Rahab, the name of the primeval monster known under the more familiar name of Tiamat, the great opponent of Yahweh (see Job 26¹², Ps. 89¹⁰, Isa. 51⁹).¹ That the word was understood in the sense of "idols" or *vain things* by the Septuagint is significant, and justifies our rendering: *And turneth not unto vain things, falling away to falsehood* (καὶ οὐκ ἐνέβλεψεν εἰς ματαιότηας καὶ μανίας ψευδέως). The root from which the word *falling away* comes (שָׁטָה, *satah*) means, in its cognate form in the Targum (שָׁטָא, *sata'*), "to apostatize". Our psalmist is, thus, insisting on the blessedness of the man who trusts in Yahweh and not in idols. And he goes on (5) to declare that *there is none to compare with him*, who has *wrought wondrous works* for his people; they are innumerable. In vv. 6-8 the Hebrew text seems to have got into some disorder; we have sought to give a logical sequence to the lines; but the text is corrupt in parts. Generally speaking, in the *Psalms* the sacrificial system is taken for granted, which makes the passage before us all the more remarkable (see also 50⁸⁻¹⁴, 51^{16, 17}, 69^{30, 31}). Four terms are used of sacrifices which are unacceptable to Yahweh: the first, *sacrifice* (*zebah*) is a

¹ See Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos*, pp. 30-40 (1895).

general term, meaning lit. "slaughter" (for sacrifice); the *meal-offering* (*minḥah*) was, in post-exilic times, a cereal offering, though in earlier days it was also a general term for any kind of gift-offering to Yahweh; it was offered every evening; the *whole burnt-offering* ('*ôlâh*), called also *kalil* ("holocaust"), is the most usual term applied to the offering of the entire victim; it was offered every morning; and the *sin-offering* (*ḥaṭā'ṭh*), which in post-exilic times was an expiatory sacrifice. That the thank-offering (*tôdāh*) is not mentioned is because it was included under the *zebah*-sacrifices. The psalmist thus insists that, as expressions of gratitude to Yahweh, all such offerings are unacceptable to him. This repudiation of the sacrificial system was doubtless due, in the first instance, to the influence of prophetic teaching. But an advance on this must be noted in what is said here and in the other psalms referred to. It is customary to take a few passages from some of the prophetic books, and to draw from them the deduction that the prophets advocated the entire abrogation of sacrifices; while many other passages in which the offering of sacrifices is taken for granted are ignored. The fact is, however, that while the prophets strongly condemned sacrifices when offered in the wrong spirit, they did not condemn them if offered in sincerity of motive. Jeremiah was the one exception, and with him, in the psalms mentioned, sacrifices *per se* are repudiated, and a purely spiritual worship is advocated. This was an advance in religious belief and practice which was especially characteristic of certain circles during late post-exilic times.¹

Having thus expressed his disbelief in the need of sacrifices, the psalmist declares what he holds to be truly acceptable to God. Just as he had ascribed as due to divine inspiration the utterance of his "new song", so does he now ascribe to the same source his apprehension of what the practice of true religion consists: 6^b, *Mine ears hast thou perfected for me*; the Hebrew text has, "Ears hast thou dug for me;" and it is, of course, possible to extract some sense from this; but it is an extraordinary mode of expression, and the text is regarded as corrupt by the great majority of modern commentators. Our rendering is based on G (see text-critical note), which gives excellent sense: Yahweh has so perfected the ears of his servant, *i.e.*, the faculty of apprehending his will (cp. Isa. 50^{4, 5}), that the servant discerns at once what is truly acceptable to him, *i.e.*, that which is written (7) *in the roll of the book*, in other words, his Law, expressive of his will: 8, *to do thy will I delight, thy Law is within my heart.* 9-11. Then, like every true and zealous servant of God, he is impelled to bear witness before others: *I proclaim thy righteousness in the great assembly, i.e.*, of worshippers; and, in his conviction of acting in

¹ On the whole subject see Oesterley, *Sacrifices in Ancient Israel*, chaps. xiv, xv (1937).

accordance with the divine will, he can say: *Behold, my lips I do not restrain, Yahweh, thou knowest; thy righteousness I hide not within my heart . . .*; and he again glories in his championship of Yahweh: *I do not conceal thy lovingkindness and mercy before the great assembly.* The beautiful psalm ends appropriately with a declaration of faith in Yahweh: *Thou, Yahweh, wilt not withhold thy tender-mercies from me; thy love and thy truth will ever preserve me.*

The deep religious feeling expressed throughout the psalm has been emphasized in the notes above; a special section on the religious teaching is, therefore, not required.

Verses 13-17 (14-18) = Ps. 70.

- ° [12 (13). For troubles encompass me beyond number,
Mine iniquities have overtaken me,
I am unable ° to bear ° them,
They are more than the hairs of
my head, and my heart hath failed me.] °
13 (14). Be pleased, Yahweh, to deliver
me, ° haste thee to help me.
14 (15). Let them be put to shame and
confounded together, that seek after my soul, °
Let them turn themselves back-
wards and be brought to dis-
honour, that desire my hurt;
15 (16). ° Let them turn away ° in
consequence of their shame-
fulness, that say ° Aha, Aha;
16 (17). Let them rejoice and be glad in
thee, all that seek thee,
Let them say, ° Yahweh be
magnified, that love thy salvation.
17 (18). But I am poor and needy, ° O God, haste thee to me, °
° My helper ° and my deliverer
art thou, my God, tarry not.

Text-critical Notes

12. See exegetical note. Read, with Duhm, לִרְאוֹת for לִשְׁאֹת, "to see (them)". 13. Om. יהוה "Yahweh", the repetition overloads the half-line. 14. Om., as in Ps. 70³, לִסְפוֹתָהּ, "to snatch it away". 15. Read, as in Ps. 70³, וְשִׁבְרִי for וְשִׁמְרִי, "let them be desolated", or "appalled". Om., as in Ps. 70³, לִי, "to me". 16. Om. תָּמִיד "continually", for the rhythm's sake. 17. Read, as in Ps. 70⁵, וְיִדְּבָרְךָ חַיְלֶיךָ לִי for וְיִדְּבָרְךָ לִי, "my Lord hath regard unto me". Read עֲזָרִי, partic. cp. Ps. 70⁵, for עֲזָרְךָ, "my help", to correspond with "my deliverer".

12. This verse is so entirely out of harmony with the whole spirit of the preceding psalm that it cannot have been part of it; and there is nothing corresponding to it in Ps. 70. It must, therefore, have been inserted by the redactor in order to form a link between the two psalms. But the link was inappropriately chosen; for the content of the verse presupposes circumstances differing from those of the psalm which follows. In the former, which is but a fragment, the penitent pours out his confession, recognizing that his troubles are the consequence of his iniquities; while the psalm is a prayer to Yahweh for deliverance

from enemies ; and there is no hint that the petitioner is conscious of sinfulness ; all that he says about himself is that he is poor and needy. The thoughts and expressions of the interjected verse are taken largely from other psalms (88³, 38⁴, 69⁴, 73²⁶).

13. The prayer for deliverance from enemies takes an unusual form : *Be pleased, Yahweh . . .* ; in such a connexion the expression does not occur elsewhere. The sense of close relationship to Yahweh emboldens the psalmist, in his perilous position, to urge Yahweh to be speedy with his help, *haste thee to help me* ; so, too, in the concluding verse ; it is a mode of address which would be unseemly on the part of man to God, were it not for the childlike, trustful sense of closeness to him which fills the psalmist's heart (cp. Pss. 22¹⁹, 38²², 71¹², 141¹). 14, 15. The petition against the enemies expresses itself in a threefold form : *Let them be put to shame and confounded together . . .* (cp. Ps. 35^{4, 26}) ; how this is to be brought about is not indicated, as it is in Ps. 35¹⁻³. The second petition is difficult to render adequately without a paraphrase ; the verb, *let them turn themselves backwards*, is often used in the sense of apostatizing from Yahweh, see especially Ps. 78^{56, 67} ; so that what is implied is that the enemies may become renegades to their faith, and thus *be brought to dishonour*. Parallel with this is the third petition, where again the verb *Let them turn away*, in one of its various meanings, has the sense of turning from Yahweh (e.g., Ps. 78⁴¹, 1 Sam. 15¹¹, 1 Kgs. 9⁶, etc.). The rendering given above is that of Ps. 70¹⁴, which is a better parallel than that of the Hebrew word here, "let them be desolated", or "appalled". The interjection *Aha, Aha* expresses the delight of the enemies at the downfall of a godly man ; it is not for such to rejoice ; this is reserved (16) for *all that seek* Yahweh, and magnify him. 17. The psalm closes with a final appeal to Yahweh from his *poor and needy* servant (cp. Pss. 86¹, 109²²).

PSALM 41

THE opening verses of this psalm speak of the blessedness of the man who helps those who are in want. An abrupt change of subject then occurs, namely, a confession of sin, followed in the rest of the psalm by an account of the evil words and acts of the enemies of the psalmist, of which he has been made the victim. Another abrupt change of subject occurs at the end of the psalm where the psalmist makes an assertion of his integrity. There seems, thus, to be some incongruity in the way in which the subject-matter is presented. Nevertheless, having regard to the various emotions called forth owing to the circum-

stances in which the psalmist finds himself, this apparent incongruity is wholly natural. The absence of a strictly logical sequence of thought, noticeable in some other psalms of a similar nature, is a mark of realism, and shows how very human the psalmists were. Here we have one who, by acts of kindness to his less fortunate neighbours, had fulfilled the commandment in spirit and in act: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Lev. 19¹⁸); hence the very natural and justified feeling of a sense of righteousness, and the conviction that God's blessing is upon him. But then there is the fact that he is suffering sickness, and that many enemies are seeking his harm; this calls forth the feeling that he must in some ways have been lacking in his duty to God, in consequence of which troubles have come upon him as a punishment for sin; and therefore he confesses that he has sinned against God. But then, again, in considering the altogether uncalled-for and vindictive behaviour of his enemies, he becomes convinced that they cannot be the instruments of punishment for sin, and that he is justified in calling upon God for help in rendering to his enemies due requital. He can, thus, revert to the thought with which he began his psalm, and boldly maintain that "in mine integrity thou upholdest me".

The text has undergone some corruption, and in one or two cases emendation is difficult and uncertain.

The general content of the psalm suggests a late post-exilic date.

The metre is, generally speaking, 4 : 4, but the textual corruptions make this uncertain in several cases.

1. *For the Precentor : A Psalm. David's.*

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 (2). Blessed is he that considereth the poor ° and needy, ° | in the day of trouble Yahweh delivereth him ; |
| 2 (3). ° He preserveth him, and keepeth him alive, ° that he may prosper ° in the land, | ° and giveth him not over ° to the desire of his enemies. |
| 3 (4). Yahweh upholdeth him on his bed of languishing, | ° all his pain thou turnest to strength. ° |
| 4 (5). As for me, I said, Yahweh, be gracious unto me, | heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee ; |
| 5 (6). Mine enemies speak evil concerning me ° : | " When shall he die, and his name perish ? " |
| 6 (7). And when one cometh to see me he speaketh falsehood, ° | he gathereth mischief ° and uttereth it abroad. |
| 7 (8). All that hate me whisper together against me, | against me do they devise evil for me ; |
| 8 (9). A base thing ° do they pour out ° against me ° : | " ° Now ° that he lieth down let him rise up no more. " |
| 9 (10). Even my familiar friend whom I trusted, | who ate of my bread, hath magnified himself against me. ° |
| 10 (11). But thou, Yahweh, be gracious unto me, and raise me up, | that I may render to them ° requital °. |
| 11 (12). Hereby shall I know that thou favourest me, | that mine enemy exult not over me. |
| 12 (13). As for me, in mine integrity thou upholdest me, | and settest me up before thy face for ever. |
| 13 (14). Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Israel, | from henceforth now and for ever. |

Amen, and Amen.

Text-critical Notes

1. Add, with G, וְאֶחָיו, as demanded by the metre. 2. Om. יְהוָה which overloads the half-line. Read, with some MSS., וְאֶשֶׁר for וְאֵשֶׁר, "he shall be happy". Read, with G, וְלֹא יִתְּנֶהוּ for וְלֹא יִתְּנֶהוּ, "and give him not over". 3. Read, with Gunkel, כָּל-מִשְׁכָּבוֹ הִפְכָּתָּ לְחֵלִיל for כָּל-מִשְׁכָּבוֹ הִפְכָּתָּ לְחֵלִיל, "all his bed thou turnest in his sickness"; the verb, הִפְכָּתָּ, cannot be used in this sense. 5. Read עָלַי for לִי, "to me". 6. Om. לְבָבוֹ, "his heart", and לוֹ נִצָּח, "to himself, he goeth forth". But the whole verse is so overloaded that emendations, of which many are proposed by commentators, are very uncertain. 8. Read וְצִוֵּה for וְצִוֵּה, "he poureth out"; and read, with G, בִּי for בּוֹ, "against him". Read וְאֶשֶׁר for וְאֵשֶׁר, "and which". 9. Om. עָקֵב, "heel". 10. Add עָקֵב from the preceding verse (cp. Ps. 19¹³).

1-3. In these opening verses the psalmist, in reference to himself, describes what is the lot of him *that considereth the poor and needy*; he is rewarded by *Yahweh*, who, *in the day of trouble delivereth him* (cp. Ps. 37¹⁹), and *keepeth him alive* (cp. Ps. 30³), so *that he may prosper in the land* (cp. Ps. 112²), and who protects him from *the desire of his enemies* (cp. Ps. 27¹²), and upholds him in sickness (cp. Ps. 30²). He then turns (4-11) to the experience through which he has passed, the vindictiveness of his enemies, and the sickness he had suffered; from both of which *Yahweh* had delivered him. 4. *As for me, I said*; thus, he refers to the past; at that time, when he was ill (v. 8), and when his enemies were maturing all kinds of evil against him, he felt that these were scourges whereby God was punishing him for sin; so he confessed: *I have sinned against thee*, yet praying that *Yahweh* will be *gracious unto him*, and *heal him*. And then he opens his heart to God, and describes the nature of the machinations which his enemies weave in order to encompass his destruction. This is contained in vv. 5-8. Why it is that these enemies have risen up against him, the psalmist does not say; it is, however, to be noted that there is no indication of their being actuated by religious motives, as, e.g., in Ps. 31, or by political rancour, as, e.g., in Ps. 140. It is personal animosity that prompts their action, and, as the expressions occurring in these verses show, it is by means of a magical spell that his enemies seek to compass his destruction.¹ Thus, to *speak evil*, to *speak falsehood*, to *gather mischief*, to *whisper*, a *base thing*, lit. "a word of Belial", are all terms used in connexion with sorcery; though it is granted that they also occur in a more general sense; but the use of them all here together points rather to the former. That among his enemies there should be numbered (9) his *familiar friend* (lit. "the friend of my peace") *whom* he had *trusted*, and who *ate of his bread*, was particularly distressing (this verse is

¹ See Mowinckel, *Psalmstudien I, Awän und die individuellen Klage-psalmen*, pp. 17 ff., 105 (1921); and for the subject in general, Blau, *Das altjüdische Zauberwesen* (1898), Nicolsky, *Spuren magischer Formeln in den Psalmen* (1927).

quoted in John 13¹⁸). In his bitter indignation, aroused by the cruel treatment to which he has been subjected, the psalmist utters the very human, but unseemly, request (10, 11) that Yahweh will help him to take vengeance. That ends the account of the past sufferings of the psalmist. He then takes up his opening thought, convinced that (12) in his *integrity* God will *uphold* him, and *set him before his face for ever*. The last verse (13) is not part of the psalm, it is the benediction which the final redactor of the Psalter placed at the conclusion of each of the five books into which it was divided, in imitation of the five books of Moses.

For the religious teaching of the book, see the introductory section.

PSALMS 42, 43

IN many MSS. these two psalms are treated as one ; that they formed a unity originally does not admit of doubt ; the identical refrain occurs in each (42^{5, 11}, 43⁵), similar thoughts appear, and the phrase in 42⁹ is repeated in 43⁵. With most commentators, therefore, we deal with both parts as forming a single psalm.

The psalm is one of the most touching in the Psalter ; both thought and word, as well as the conditions under which it was composed, stamp it as, in some respects, unique. It was written by one living far from home in a foreign land ; why he had left his home is not told, probably it was against his will, for the strangers among whom his lot is cast treat him with contempt and roughness. He yearns for home. His homesickness is made the more bitter through a very grievous illness from which he is suffering. Mind and body are thus plunged in agony. Nevertheless, in sanctified self-communing he gains comfort and spiritual strength by recalling the happy days of the past when he went with the throng of worshippers into the house of God. But, above all, he waits in hope and trust, for in his living faith he is confident that, by the mercy of God, the time will yet come when he will once more enter into the presence of God, and give him thanks for deliverance.

As in the case of so many psalms, to assign a date is difficult ; opinions, as so often, vary. One or two considerations may be offered which may help in suggesting a date. That the writer's home was in northern Palestine seems clear from his mention of " the Hermons " (v. 6) ; and the fact that Jerusalem is never mentioned points in the same direction ; that the writer speaks of God's " dwelling-places ", in the plural, would mark the psalm as pre-exilic. The " house of God " (v. 4) does not necessarily refer to the temple, cp. Bethel ; and the expression, " the tent of the glorious one " (v. 4), which has naturally

occasioned much difficulty, is very ancient. On the other hand, "thy holy hill" (43³) cannot refer to anything but mount Zion; we have "the hill of Samaria" in 1Kgs. 16²⁴, but there was assuredly nothing holy about it. In view of these various points, we suggest, but quite tentatively, that this psalm was originally written by one of those carried away captive after the fall of Samaria, 721 B.C., but that, in later days, it was used, and slightly worked over.

The metre is, with quite a few exceptions, 3 : 2.

1. *For the Precentor : Maskil. Of the Sons of Qorah.*

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 (2). As the hart panteth
So panteth my soul</p> <p>2 (3). My soul thirsteth for God,
When shall I come ° and behold °</p> <p>3 (4). My tears have been for me my food
° While they say ° to me all the
day :</p> <p>4 (5). These things I recall, and pour out
How I went ° into the tent ° ° of
the Glorious One °,
With the sound of joy and praise,</p> <p>5 (6). Why art thou bowed down, my
soul,
Wait for God, for I will yet thank
him,
My soul is bowed down within me,
From the land of Jordan and the
Hermions,</p> <p>7 (8). Deep calleth unto deep
All their waves and their billows</p> <p>8 (9). In the day-time ° I watch for
Yahweh °,
Within me (my) ° meditation ° is a
prayer</p> <p>9 (10). I say unto God, my Rock :
Wherefore go I mourning,</p> <p>10 (11). ° Like ° a shattering in my bones,
Mine enemies revile me,
While they say unto me all the day :</p> <p>11 (12). Why art thou bowed down, my
soul,
Wait for God, for I will yet thank
him,</p> | <p>° for ° water-brooks,
for thee, O God.
the living God ;
the face of God ?
day and night,</p> <p>" Where is thy God ? "
my soul upon me :</p> <p>into the house of God,
° the clamour of the pilgrims °.</p> <p>and groanest within me ?
° the help of my countenance, 6 (7) and
my God °.
therefore I think of thee</p> <p>from the hill of Mizar.
at the sound of ° their rushing ° ;
have passed over me.</p> <p>° and for his mercy at night ° ;</p> <p>° to the living God ° ;
" Why hast thou forgotten me ?
while the enemy oppresseth ? "</p> <p>" Where is thy God ? "</p> <p>and ° groanest within me ?
the ° help ° of my countenance, and my
God.</p> |
|---|---|

XLIII.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Judge me, O God,
and champion my cause,
against an ungodly nation,
From men of deceit</p> <p>2. For thou art the God of my strength,
Wherefore go I mourning</p> <p>3. O send out thy light and thy truth,
Let them bring me to thy holy hill,</p> <p>4. That I may go unto the altar of God,
° That I may rejoice ° and praise thee
with harp,</p> <p>5. Why art thou bowed down, my soul,
Wait for God, for I will yet thank him,</p> | <p>and injustice deliver me.
why hast thou cast me off ?
while the enemy oppresseth ?
let them lead me,
and into thy dwelling-places,
to the God of ° my joy, °</p> <p>O God, my God.
and ° groanest within me ?
the ° help ° of my countenance, and my
God.</p> |
|---|--|

Text-critical Notes

1. Read אֶל (lit. "unto") for עַל, "upon" or "by". 2. Read, with some MSS. and S, וְאֵרָאָה for וְאֵרָאָה, "and be seen", or "appear". 3. Read, as in v. 10, בְּצֶמֶח for בְּצֶמֶח, "while one saith". 4. Read בְּצֶמֶח for בְּצֶמֶח, and אֲדִיר cp. G (see Ps. 81⁹) for אֲדִיר, "I led them"; and הַמִּוֵּן הַיּוֹם for הַמִּוֵּן הַיּוֹם, "a multitude keeping holy-day". 5. Read יְשׁוּעָה פָּנֵי וְאֵלֹהֵי for יְשׁוּעָה פָּנֵי וְאֵלֹהֵי, "the helps of his countenance. O my God". 7. Read צִנּוֹרֶיךָ for צִנּוֹרֶיךָ, "thy rushing". 8. Read, with Gunkel, וְיִהְיֶה בַיּוֹם for וְיִהְיֶה בַיּוֹם, "Yahweh commandeth"; and חֲסִדוֹ וּבִלְבָּלָה for חֲסִדוֹ וּבִלְבָּלָה, "his mercy and in the night"; and (cp. G) שִׁירָה for שִׁירָה, "song"; and לֵאלֹהֵי for לֵאלֹהֵי, "to the God of my life". 10. Read בְּ for בְּ, "in". 11. Om. מִן (see v. 6); and read יְשׁוּעָה for עֵרָה— xliii. 4. Read שִׂמְחָתִי for שִׂמְחָתִי, "my joy". 5. Read as in xlii. 5, 11.

1. With a picture as graphic as it is realistic, the psalmist, without preamble, pours out the yearning of his heart for communion with God: *As the hart panteth for water-brooks, so panteth my soul for thee, O God.* The simile is immensely expressive when one pictures a hart parched with thirst, gasping for the one thing that can give relief, the water-brooks, wherein flowed the running or "living" water, as it was called (e.g., Lev. 14^{5, 6}). 2. And the *soul* of the psalmist *thirsteth for the living God.* The way in which his "thirst" must be assuaged he puts in the form of a question: *When shall I come and behold the face of God?* which at the same time expresses a longing. - The point of these words is, not that his "thirst" will be allayed by his appearing before God, but by his beholding God; it is the psalmist, athirst, who seeks God. The Hebrew as now pointed can, it is true, be translated: "When shall I come and appear (lit. "be seen") before God?" but in the Hebrew it is bad grammar, and cannot possibly be original. The present pointing, involving a passive instead of an active sense ("when shall I be seen" instead of "when shall I see"), was put in for the purpose of counteracting an erroneous conception of the Almighty; the same alteration has been made in Deut. 16¹⁶ and Isa. 1¹². In earlier times it was believed that God could be seen, Gen. 32³⁰, cp. Judg. 6^{22, 23}, 13²², Isa. 6⁵, and especially Exod. 33²⁰, where the words are put into the mouth of God: "Thou canst not see my face; for man shall not see me and live", implying the possibility in the mind of Moses of seeing the face of God. This belief was expressed by the psalmist, but, with the development of more spiritual ideas concerning God, the need of altering the sense of the words under consideration was recognized. 3. The thought of being far from God, in a foreign land, fills the psalmist with bitter sorrow, so that his *tears* are to him as *food*, a hyperbolic way of expressing the depth of grief; and this grief is aggravated by the mockery of those about him: *Where is thy God?* they ask him. 4, 5. Under these circumstances there is, at any rate, one thing that can give him comfort: he *recalls* the past in self-com-

muning, or, as he expresses it: *I pour out my soul upon me*, meaning that he presents to himself the flood of happy memories of long ago. He was wont to go into *the tent of the Glorious One*, that is, *the house of God*, with joy in the company of pilgrims. The expression *tent* for the house of God is archaic; it is used, in the first instance, of the tabernacle in the wilderness (Exod. 26⁶, 39³²), but also of other places of worship (Ps. 78⁶⁰, 1 Chron. 16¹, 2 Chron. 1⁴), so that, unlike Ps. 76², the temple in Jerusalem is by no means necessarily meant. The expression "the Glorious One" (*'Addir*), represents an emendation suggested by the Septuagint, as the Hebrew text can hardly be correct; it is true that, as applied to God, its occurrence is rare; nevertheless, it does occur (Isa. 10³⁴, 33¹, cp. Ps. 8¹). These thoughts so cheer the psalmist in his sorrow that, in the words of the thrice repeated refrain, he reproaches himself for being so downcast; he will yet be able to *thank* God for deliverance; and he thinks again of his homeland, *the land of Jordan*; the river rises to the north of the various Hermon peaks (hence "the Hermons") and flows slightly eastwards round the foot of these; hence the expression *the land of Jordan*, though it also applies to the whole of Palestine. The locality of *the hill of Mizar* is not known.

From these thoughts the psalmist turns abruptly to his perilous position. 7. He has been brought very near to death, and this he expresses in realistic, but poetical, language; he has been engulfed in the waters of the underworld; the use of *Tehom* for "Deep" proves that this was in the mind of the psalmist, similarly as in the psalm in Jon. 2, where Jonah speaks of the waters which compassed him, and of "Tehom round about" (vv. 5, 6). 8-11. Nevertheless, his faith in Yahweh is not shaken; his thought of God becomes a prayer, *within me my meditation is a prayer to the living God*; even though he utters his plaint because God seems to have forgotten him, and the mental anguish caused by the *reviling* of his *enemies* is like *a shattering* in his *bones*—even so, in self-adjuration he repeats his refrain; his soul need not be bowed down, for he will yet thank God for deliverance. 43¹. Another abrupt change of thought then finds utterance; in his conviction that God is on his side, the psalmist experiences a sense of uprightness, so that he can boldly appeal to God to uphold him against his enemies: *Judge me, O God, and champion my cause against an ungodly nation*; this last is not to be understood in a literal sense; it is one of several somewhat exaggerated modes of expression which occur several times in the same psalm. The final verses (2-5) of the psalm illustrate the alternating emotions which in turn dominate the psalmist's being: firm faith, *thou art the God of my strength*; the puzzled thought that God seems to have forsaken him, *why hast thou cast me off?*; then the prayer for divine guidance, *O send out thy light and thy truth, let them lead me*; followed by the joyful looking forward to

praise God with harp; and, finally, the reiteration of the refrain proclaiming the certitude that the time will soon come when he will *thank* God for deliverance.

It is impossible not to recognize the extreme naturalness of these conflicting emotions of one in the position in which the psalmist found himself; the outpouring of his inner self on the part of this saintly singer which is here presented is as instructive as it is touching.

Religious Teaching

There are two directions in which the religious element of this psalm is particularly impressive. The earnest longing to be in communion with God, so uniquely but realistically expressed, is, in various degrees, characteristic of most of the psalmists, and will come before us again and again. Of this, therefore, we shall say no more here. But the other subject, though occurring sometimes elsewhere in the *Psalms*, is nowhere presented with quite the same open-hearted candour and straightforwardness as here. We mean the act of religious self-communing. In its most pointed form this comes out in the thrice-repeated refrain, but it occurs also in one or two other verses (4, 8). The psalmist addresses his soul as though it were distinct from himself, and yet, almost in the same breath, identifies himself with it. He takes his soul to task for its despondency, but immediately protests his own faith in God. It is this self-communing, when honestly and devoutly practised, which is one of the most necessary and helpful elements in personal religion; and it could not be more simply, yet instructively, illustrated than in the psalm before us. Religious difficulties and problems of faith have confronted men in all ages; in many ways help may be afforded, and light shed in dark places; but ultimately, under God, the believer must unflinchingly commune with his individual self; he must be the final arbiter; that is the condition of the divinely given free-will. The responsibility is great, but it may not be shirked; and the psalmist teaches so beautifully how courageous self-communing issues; there may be some waiting, but assuredly in the end divine grace will help.

PSALM 44

THIS psalm presents us with the picture of the mental struggle of one who through the calamity which has overcome him and his people seems to have somewhat lost his spiritual balance; for what is said in the latter part of it sounds like a rebuke to the Almighty. The redeeming quality of the psalm lies in the psalmist's ardent belief that God can

help in time of trouble; but this belief is marred by an irreverent approach to the Almighty which is without parallel in the Psalter. That the psalm is not used in the worship of the Synagogue is comprehensible. Various indications point to the psalm having been written in late post-exilic times. It is held by some commentators that it belongs to Maccabæan times, and *v.* 22, *e.g.*, is quoted as pointing to a religious persecution; but to isolate a verse in this way without taking the context into consideration may lead to erroneous conclusions. One has but to read, *e.g.*, *vv.* 11–14, and compare what is said in them with the account of the Maccabæan struggle given in 1 *Maccabees* to see how impossible it is to regard this psalm as belonging to the Maccabæan period. At what time during this period could it be said that the Jews were scattered amidst the nations, or that they were a byword among the nations? But for the short-lived success of the Syrians, within quite a restricted area, at the beginning of the struggle, the Maccabæan wars were, with one or two set-backs, a series of Jewish triumphs. Even at the initial catastrophe, so far from there being any question of succumbing to the nations, Mattathias says: “And take ye unto you all the doers of the Law, and avenge the wrong of your people. Render a recompense to the Gentiles, and take heed to the commandments of the Law” (1 Macc. 2^{67, 68}). Whatever episode it was to which our psalm refers, it could not have been to that of the Maccabæan struggle.¹ It must be remembered that, owing to lack of details, our knowledge of Jewish history during the early part of the Greek period is limited.

The metre, with the exception of *v.* 21, is uniformly 3 : 3.

1. *For the Precentor : Of the Sons of Qorah. Maskil.*

- | | | |
|----------|---|--|
| 1 (2). | O God, with our ears have we heard,
The work that thou didst in their days,
Nations ° thou didst drive out, °
and plantdest them in, | our fathers have told unto us,
in the days of old 2 (3) ° by thy hand. °
diddst afflict peoples, ° and settle them down °; |
| 3 (4). | For not by their sword did they possess the land,
But thy right-hand ° and thy strong arm, ° | and not was their arm victorious for them;
and the light of thy countenance, for thou didst favour them. |
| 4 (5). | Thou art my King and ° my God, ° | ° thou commandest ° the victories of Jacob; |
| 5 (6). | Through thee do we push back our adversaries, | and in thy name do we tread down those that rise up against us. |
| 6 (7). | For not in my bow do I trust, | my sword doth not gain me the victory; |
| 7 (8). | But thou makest us victorious over our foes, | and bringest to shame them that hate us. |
| 8 (9). | We praise ° God ° every day, | to thy name will we give thanks evermore. Selah. |
| 9 (10). | But thou hast cast us off, and brought us to shame, | and thou wentest not forth with our hosts; |
| 10 (11). | Thou madest us turn back from the foe, | and they that hate us took spoil for themselves; |
| 11 (12). | Thou gavest us for food like sheep, | ° amidst the nations ° hast thou scattered us; |

¹ On the whole question of Maccabæan psalms, see pp. 67 ff.

- 12 (13). Thou hast sold thy people ° for
nought,^o
13 (14). ° We are become ° a reproach to
our neighbours,
14 (15). Thou hast made us a byword
among the nations,
15 (16). Every day is my dishonour before
me,
16 (17). Because of the voice of the scorner
and reviler,
17 (18). All this is come upon us, yet have
we not forgotten thee,
18 (19). Our heart is not turned backward,
19 (20). Yet ° hast thou thrust us ° into
the place of ° dragons,^o
20 (21). Had we forgotten the name of our
God,
21 (22). Would not God have searched out this ?
For he knoweth
the secrets of the heart.
22 (23). Yea, for thy sake are we slain all
the day,
23 (24). Awake, ° Yahweh, ° wherefore
 sleepest thou ?
24 (25). Wherefore hidest thou thy face,
25 (26). For our soul is bowed down to the
dust,
26 (27). Arise as a help for us,
- and madest no profit by their prices.
a scorn and derision to those around
us;
a wagging of the head among the
peoples.
and shame ° hath covered ° my face,
because of the presence of the enemy
and avenger.
neither have we dealt falsely in thy
covenant;
nor ° our step ° declined from thy way;
and hast covered us with darkness.
and stretched out our hands to a
strange-god,
we are accounted as sheep for
slaughter.
arise, cast us not off for ever !
and forgettest our affliction and
oppression ?
our belly cleaveth to the ground.
and redeem us for thy love's sake.

Text-critical Notes

2. Read, for the rhythm's sake, ^{הַיָּד} for ^{יָדְךָ}, "thou, thy hand". Read ^{וְיָרְשָׁתָהּ} (cp. Deut. 33²⁷) for ^{וְיָרְשָׁתָהּ}, "thou didst cause to inherit". Read, with several commentators, ^{וְיָרְשָׁתָהּ}, lit. "and thou didst transplant them" (cp. Ezek. 19¹³). 3. Read, for the rhythm's sake, ^{וְיָרְשָׁתָהּ} as in Ps. 89¹⁰, for ^{וְיָרְשָׁתָהּ}, "and thine arm". 4. Read, with GS, ^{וְיָרְשָׁתָהּ} for ^{וְיָרְשָׁתָהּ}, "God". Read, with GS, ^{וְיָרְשָׁתָהּ} for ^{וְיָרְשָׁתָהּ}, "he commanded". 8. Read ^{וְיָרְשָׁתָהּ} for ^{וְיָרְשָׁתָהּ}, "in God". 11. Read ^{וְיָרְשָׁתָהּ} for ^{וְיָרְשָׁתָהּ}, "and among the nations", for the rhythm's sake. 12. For the phrase ^{וְיָרְשָׁתָהּ}, see GK 152a, Rem. i. 13. Read ^{וְיָרְשָׁתָהּ}, as in Ps. 79⁴, for ^{וְיָרְשָׁתָהּ}, "thou makest us", the same word occurs in the next verse. 15. Read ^{וְיָרְשָׁתָהּ} for ^{וְיָרְשָׁתָהּ}, "hath covered me". 18. Read, with some MSS., ^{וְיָרְשָׁתָהּ} for ^{וְיָרְשָׁתָהּ}, "our steps", as the verb is in the sing. 19. Read, with Budde, ^{וְיָרְשָׁתָהּ} for ^{וְיָרְשָׁתָהּ}, "thou hast crushed us". Read, with some MSS., ^{וְיָרְשָׁתָהּ} for ^{וְיָרְשָׁתָהּ}, "jackals". 23. Read, with many MSS., ^{וְיָרְשָׁתָהּ}, and om. ^{וְיָרְשָׁתָהּ}, "O Lord".

1-3. These introductory verses set forth the reason why divine help is to be looked for in view of the perilous circumstances in which the people find themselves, and which are described in what follows. The psalmist, identifying himself with his people, records how they had *heard* what their *fathers* had *told* them of the *work* which *in the days of old* had been wrought by the *hand* of God. The reference is, of course, to the conquest of Canaan, when God *drove out nations*, and *planted them*, i.e., the fathers, *in* the land. The history as recorded in the book of *Joshua* is envisaged rather than that of *Judges*. But, as the psalmist goes on to say, the possession of the land was not gained by their *sword*, nor

was it *their arm* which won them the victory ; it was by God's *right-hand* and by his *strong arm*, and by *the light* of his *countenance*, because his *favour* was with them. For the expression *the light of thy countenance*, meaning the sign of divine favour, cp. Ps. 4⁶. Two matters in these verses demand brief notice. When it is said : *With our ears have we heard, and our fathers have told us*, we have a clear reference to the oral tradition, the handing down of which is enjoined in Deut. 6²⁰⁻²³, and which is kept up to the present day by Jews at the annual *Seder Festival*, i.e., the Home-Festival part of the Passover feast. The recounting of past history by word of mouth, rather than by the reading of the written word, was necessitated in days when copies of the Scriptures would not be in the hands of many. One result of this, however, was that a number of historical details would be passed over ; so that, and this is the second matter to be noted in these verses, nothing is said of the long-drawn-out struggles whereby the promised land was at long last gained. That the possession of the land was imputed to the divine act alone witnesses to a very living faith, which is seen also in the *Deuteronomy* passage referred to ; but the history shows that human action, too, was demanded. 4-8. Just as in the days of old trust was placed in divine help, so now faith in God is expressed : *Thou art my King and my God, that commandest the victories of Jacob* (for "Jacob" used in reference to the whole people, cp., e.g., Exod. 19³, Am. 3¹³, though the phrase is usually "the house of Jacob"). The personal note struck by the psalmist, *For not in my bow do I trust . . .*, when he is otherwise speaking in the name of his people, is striking ; it witnesses to his sense of unity with his people ; this is a *trait* frequently occurring in the psalms. A realistic picture is envisaged where it is said : *Through thee do we push back our adversaries* ; it is doubtless taken from Deut. 33¹⁷ : "And his horns are the horns of the wild-ox, with them shall he push peoples, all of them . . ." (cp. 1 Kgs. 22¹¹) ; and just as the wild-ox tramples upon those whom he has "pushed back", so do the people *tread down them that rise up against them*. This is done *in thy name*, i.e., by invoking the divine name, see Ps. 20¹. In this faith *praise* and *thanks* are daily offered to *thy name* (cp. Ps. 34¹⁻⁴).

So far, the psalmist has been recalling past history upon which is based the conviction that divine help is ever-present. From this he turns (9-16) to contemplate the melancholy condition in which the people find themselves at the present time. A battle has been fought, and lost ; and this is ascribed to the absence of the divine presence : *thou wentest not forth with our hosts* (see, on the contrary, Ps. 60¹²) ; indeed, the defeat of his people the psalmist believes to be directly due to God : *thou madest us turn back from the foe* ; this *naïve* conception of God as the God of battles was, of course, world-wide, though held in regard to various gods ; and it appears often in the Old Testament

(e.g., Judg. 4¹⁴, 2 Sam. 5²⁴). But further, in his desperate frame of mind the psalmist goes on to express thoughts in reference to the Almighty which are of an unseemly character: *Thou gavest us for food like sheep*, as though the people were, in the sight of God, of no more value than sheep (cp. v. 22); God has *sold* them for *nought*, and has made *no profit by their prices*; the verse contains a parallelism, and the thought is that of a slave-dealer who has made a bad bargain; but the implication is that although God has favoured the enemies of his people, he has not thereby gained any who will acknowledge him. Such irreverent sarcasm is without parallel in the psalms, and must be ascribed to the writer's despairing pessimism, engendered by the present apparently hopeless conditions. The people had been reduced to a position of deep humiliation, to describe which expressions are literally piled up: *a reproach* to their *neighbours*, friendly countries are meant; *a scorn and derision* (cp. Ps. 79⁴); *a byword* (lit. "a proverb", cp. Ps. 69¹¹, Job 17⁶); *a wagging of the head* (cp. Jer. 18¹⁶). Then once more (15, 16) the psalmist identifies himself with his people: *dishonour* and *shame* are his lot, because of the reproaches and revilings hurled against him, for *the enemy and avenger* is before him (cp. in general Ps. 89³⁸⁻⁵¹). The unseemly tone of the psalmist's complaint is increased by the assertion of injured innocence (17-19); unlike the far more fitting attitude of many other psalmists when in trouble, whose sense of unworthiness bows their head in humility, we have here the claim of righteousness, and the implication that God has not been dealing fairly with his people: they *have not forgotten* God, it is claimed, *nor dealt falsely in thy covenant, our heart is not turned backward, i.e., from God, nor our step declined from thy way*; yet in spite of all this vaunted righteousness he has *thrust* his people *into the place of dragons, i.e., as though God were treating his people as he treated Tiamat and her brood, identified with the sea, and conceived of as the embodiment of wickedness* (cp. Isa. 51^{9, 10}), and *covered* them *with darkness*, lit. "the shadow of death" (see note on 23⁴), cp. Job. 38^{16, 17}, where the sea is parallel with the shadow of death. 20-22. The further plea of self-justification is put forward by the claim that the people had not forgotten God by appealing to any *strange god*; on the contrary, *for thy sake we are slain all the day*. 23-25. The height of irreverence is reached when the psalmist dares to say: *Arise, Yahweh, why sleepest thou?* We are reminded of Elijah's words in reference to Baal, when he mockingly cried to the Baal-worshippers: "Cry aloud; for he is a god, either he is musing, or he is gone aside, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked!" (1 Kgs. 18²⁷). Only at the very end of this part of the psalm is there a sign of a more fitting frame of mind, when the psalmist appeals to God for his love's sake.

Religious Teaching

From what has been said it is clear that the religious teaching of this psalm is largely of a negative character. It witnesses doubtless to a very real belief in the divine guidance of history, and to a reliance on God's help, which is in the best spirit. But there are other elements which betray a very undeveloped conception of the divine Personality. The thought of Yahweh himself taking part in battle by going forth with Israel's hosts is an antique way of conceiving of the manner in which divine guidance was accorded on such occasions (see Judg. 4¹⁴, 2 Sam. 5²⁴). It may be urged that in our psalm this is merely a poetical mode of expression, not meant literally, as would have been the case in earlier days, and that the psalmist is echoing ancient traditional belief without actually sharing it himself. That is probably the case. Other passages naturally sound unfitting to our ears; the idea of God bartering with the people's enemies, and the gibe that nothing is gained by the bargain, the urging of God to wake up from sleep, and the implied reproach conveyed in the words: "Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction and oppression?" Such thoughts doubtless strike us as unseemly; but there are two considerations here which must not be lost sight of. In the first place, the psalmist's heart is overwhelmed with grief at the desperate plight in which his people found themselves; that this should have occasioned some temporary loss of the sense of proportion is so intensely human as to be pardonable. But still more to be urged is the fact that just this very condition of his suffering people was so incomprehensible to him; the first part of the psalm has shown what God's power was, and his solicitude for his people which had always been in evidence; how, therefore, was the present state of affairs to be accounted for? The people had done their duty to their God, they had not forgotten him, they had not turned backward from him, nor had they declined from his way. What, therefore, does it all mean? The psalmist is utterly puzzled. His mental condition reveals the same bewildered perplexity as that felt by Job in his words: "Show me wherefore thou contendest with me; is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress, that thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands, and shine upon the counsel of the wicked?" (Job 10^{2, 3}); and again: "I will speak in the anguish of my spirit, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. Am I a sea or a sea-monster, that thou settest a watch over me?" (Job. 7¹²). Job was a righteous man, faithful to his God, and yet he was afflicted with sore sickness and poverty! He cannot understand it; it is wholly incomprehensible to him. And so with our psalmist. The theology in which he had been brought up had taught him that God upholds the righteous, and punishes the wicked; and here were facts of experience

in glaring contrast with this ! Who dare fail to sympathize with him in his perplexity ? In spite of all, his faith did not give way, and his final words are a prayer to him in whom he believed : " Arise as a help to us, and redeem us for thy love's sake."

PSALM 45

THAT this psalm, if it may be so called, found a place in the Psalter is to be explained on grounds somewhat similar to those which ultimately permitted the admission of the *Song of Songs* into the Canon ; though, unlike that, it is purely secular in origin, but was, in later days, interpreted in a Messianic sense by the Jewish Church. The king, who plays the leading part, was conceived of as representing the Messiah, and the queen, as the princess was about to become, as the Jewish people of the Messianic era. That this interpretation was taken over, and adapted, by the early Christian community is shown by Hebr. 1⁸, 9 to have been the case.

The poem offers an illuminating picture of a royal wedding in ancient Palestine. A religious note is sounded, it is true, when the singer assures the royal bridegroom of God's continued blessing on him, and designates him as God's chosen one. This would be confidently assumed, since the king was, in a real sense, looked upon as God's representative among the people ; so much so that the king is actually addressed by the divine title. This it doubtless was which in later days, when the early conception of kingship was a thing of the past, prompted the Messianic interpretation.

Opinions differ as to who the royal personage may have been in whose honour this poem was composed ; as, however, the only known case of an Israelite king marrying a " daughter of Tyre " is that of Ahab marrying Jezebel (1 Kgs. 16³¹), there is a strong argument in favour of the contention that this is the king in question. If this is the case, then we have here one of the earlier of the psalms ; Ahab reigned 874-852 B.C. ; the fact that it contains several late words merely points to its having been worked over in subsequent periods. To its early date, and to the vicissitudes of transmission must be ascribed the corrupt state of the text. In several cases emendation presents very considerable difficulty ; in comparing the various attempts at reconstruction we are impressed by the often convincing suggestions offered by Gunkel, to whom we are largely indebted.

In spite of textual difficulties there seems little doubt but that the metre is four beats to a line ; in various cases the lines are self-contained, so that we have doubts as to a 4 : 4 metre. A 2 : 2 metre is not excluded, but some authorities would disagree here.

1. *For the Precentor : Set to "Lilies".
Belonging to the Sons of Qorah. A Maskil. A Song of Loves.*
- 1 (2). My heart is astir with goodly thought;
I will sing, even I, ° my song ° for the king—
My tongue is the pen of a skilful scribe—:
- 2 (3). "° Fairer art thou ° than the sons of men,
Poured-forth is grace upon thy lips;
Therefore hath God blest thee for ever.
- 3 (4). Gird thee thy sword on ° thy side °, O mighty one;
° With thy pomp and splendour be-mantle thy loins °.
- 4 (5). For the cause of truth, ° and for righteousness' sake °.
And may thy right-hand ° show forth ° terrible things;
May thine arrows so sharp ° strike-with-fear ° the peoples,
° May the heart of thine enemies falter, O king °.
- 6 (7). Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever,
A sceptre of right is the sceptre of thy rule,
- 7 (8). Thou hast loved justice and hated wickedness,
Therefore hath God, thy God, anointed thee,
With the oil of gladness ° in the presence of ° thy companions.
- 8 (9). Myrrh and aloes ° are all thy garments;
° Harps of ivory, — ° their strings ° give thee joy;
- 9 (10). ° The daughter of kings cometh forth to greet thee °,
A queen at thy right-hand in gold-gear from Ophir."
- 10 (11). "Hearken, O daughter °, incline thine ear,
° Forget ° thy people and thy father's house;
- 11 (12). ° Let him desire ° thy beauty, for he is thy lord.
12 (13). ° Let him kneel before thee, Tyre's-daughter °, with gifts,
Let the wealthiest of ° peoples ° give honour to thee,
13 (14). ° Give-thee-homage with corals in settings of gold °."
- 14 (15). ° Clad in gay-garments are the maidens behind her,
Her companions who lead her before the king,
15 (16). Who conduct her with gladness and joy to the palace °.
16 (17). "In place of thy fathers thou shalt have sons,
Thou shalt make them princes in all the earth.
- 17 (18). I will keep-in-memory thy name in all generations,
Therefore the peoples will praise thee for ever °."

Text-critical Notes

1. Read מַעֲשֵׂי (lit. "my work", see exegetical note) for מַעֲשֵׂי, "my works".
2. Read, with GS, יָפִי וְיָפִיתָ (lit. "beauty, thou art beautiful") for וְיָפִיתִי, an anomalous form. 3. Read, with GS, וְרָךְ for וְרָךְ, "side". Read, with Gunkel, וְהִרְרָה וְהִרְרָה וְהִרְרָה (for פְּרָכָל see 1 Chron. 15²⁷) for: הִרְרָה וְהִרְרָה וְהִרְרָה, "thy pomp and thy splendour, and thy splendour, prosper, ride on". 4. Read וְנִעַן הַצִּדִּיק for וְנִעַן הַצִּדִּיק, "and meekness, righteousness". Read וְהָרָא for וְהָרָא, "and may . . . teach thee". 5. Read, with Gunkel, עַמִּים מִתַּחְתֵּיךָ for עַמִּים מִתַּחְתֵּיךָ, "peoples under thee"; and read, following Gunkel in part: וְפָלַח לִבְ אֵיכָה חֲפִלָּה for וְפָלַח לִבְ אֵיכָה חֲפִלָּה, "may the enemies of the king falter (lit. "fall") in heart". 7. Read לִפְנֵי for מִן, "more than". 8. Om. קַצְיֹעוֹת, "cassia", which overloads the line. Read פְּלִי מִנִּי (lit. "instruments of . . .") for מִן-הַיִּבְלֵי שֵׁן, "from palaces of ivory". מִנִּי is an abbreviated form of מִכִּים, see GK 87 f. 9. Read נִצְבָּה בְּתַ מְלָכִים לְקִרְוָהּ for נִצְבָּה בְּתַ מְלָכִים לְקִרְוָהּ, "the daughters of kings are among thy honourable women, she stands". 10. Om. וְרָא, "and see", which overloads the line. Read וְרָא שְׂכָנִי omitting the ו. 11. Read וְרָא שְׂכָנִי omitting the ו. Om. הַמִּלָּה, which overloads the line. 12. Read וְשִׁמְחוּ לָהּ בְּרִיצָר for וְשִׁמְחוּ לָהּ בְּרִיצָר, "and worship him and the daughter of Tyre". Read עַמִּים for עַם, "people". 13-15. In place of the corrupt text of these verses we have adopted Gunkel's emendation:

13. וְכַבְדִּיהָ פְּגִינִים מִשְׁבְּצוֹת זָהָב
14. לְבוּשֶׁת רִקְמוֹת פְּרוּלֹת אֲחֶרֶץ
רְעוּהֶיהָ מְבִיאֹת לָהּ זִמְלָה
15. תּוֹבֵלָנָה בְּשִׁמְחֹת וְגִיל בְּהִיכָל :
17. Om. וְעַד, "and ever", which overloads the line.

For the title, see p. 16.

1. The poet begins his poem with some introductory words telling of his heart's impulse to sing in honour of the king: *My heart is astir*, lit. "bubbling over", *with goodly thought*, lit. "a good word", or "matter"; but the Hebrew word *dābār* has various meanings according to the context in which it stands; *thought*, rather than "word" is suggested here because it comes from the *heart*, the seat of the emotions and thoughts, according to the Hebrew conception. The song which this court-poet *sings*, lit. "utters", is *for the king*, i.e., in honour of the king. *My song* is lit. "my work", but this word, too, has various meanings, e.g., in Exod. 26¹ it has the sense of "a work of art"; so that in its present context it can be rendered *song*. His *tongue* is ready to pour forth words just as *a skilful scribe* (cp. Ezra 7⁶) writes copious words on a papyrus-roll with his *pen*. 2. The king is then addressed. The poet begins by extolling his personal beauty; in saying that his royal master is *fairer than the sons of men*, it is implied that he is of super-human, i.e., divine, beauty; that this is not merely exaggerated adulation in the Oriental mode (cp. Acts 12²²), is seen from v. 6, where the king is directly addressed as "God". Further, the poet says: *Poured forth is grace upon thy lips* (cp. Prov. 22¹¹, though the text there is uncertain); the previous line would suggest that what is implied is that the king's utterances are divinely inspired, and thus a divine attribute. But the divinity ascribed to the king (see further under v. 6) is, of course, of a wholly different nature from that of God Himself, from whom whatever is divine in the king is derived; so that the virtues he possesses are all the outcome of God's blessing on him: *Therefore hath God blest thee for ever*; the last expression is not to be taken literally, but must be understood in the sense of "long-continuance", as, e.g., in Pss. 22²⁶, 61⁷, cp. Am. 1¹¹. 3-5. The text of these verses is very corrupt, but the general sense is clear. The poet extols the king as victorious in battle; this is natural enough since leadership in war was a primary duty of the king in ancient Israel (cp. 1 Sam. 8²⁰); but the words are in reference to the future, for, as a young man about to marry, the king in question is hardly likely yet to have fought battles. Nevertheless, he is addressed as *a mighty one*, i.e., in battle, and bidden to *gird on his sword*. But the king is mighty in more than a merely physical sense, for the royal robes in which he is *be-mantled* symbolize *truth and righteousness*, of which he is the champion. Then the poet comes back to the earlier thought, and expresses the hope, equivalent to conviction, that in battle the *sharp arrows* of the royal warrior may *strike his enemies with fear*, and cause them to lose heart. 6, 7. The poet now addresses the king directly as *God*, and says his throne is to last *for ever and ever*, to be understood again in the sense of a long time. The context (7),

which says, *therefore hath God anointed thee*, shows that in v. 6 the words, *thy throne, O God*, are addressed to the king. If not precisely paralleled elsewhere, there are many passages which suggest the idea of deity in the king; in Isa. 9⁵, e.g., the Messianic king is called 'El gibbôr, "God of a hero"; something very near regarding the king as divine occurs in 2 Sam. 7¹⁴, 14^{17, 20}, and then there are such passages as Pss. 2⁷, 89^{26, 27}, where the king is spoken of as Yahweh's son. There can be little doubt that just as in Egypt and Babylonia, so in ancient Israel, the king was regarded as divine (see p. 49). But this conception did not, even in the minds of the prophets, endanger belief in Yahweh as the only God for Israel, because in whatever sense divinity was believed to be attached to the king, it was, and could be, only by the will and act of Yahweh, that this was brought about. Hence, his *sceptre*, the symbol of kingship, is one of *right*, or "equity" (cp. Ps. 67⁴, where the same word is used in reference to the rule of God), he has *loved justice and hated wickedness*, and his God has *anointed* him (cp. Ps. 89²⁰, 1 Sam. 10¹) with the oil of gladness (cp. Isa. 61³), i.e., the oil that gives joy or exultation; the anointing of the king takes place *in the presence of his companions*, cp. 1 Sam. 16¹³: "Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brethren." The poet then (8, 9) concludes his words to the king, recalling how, in preparation for the joyous ceremony, his garments had been perfumed so abundantly that he can say, *myrrh and aloes are all thy garments*. The text of the line which follows offers some difficulty; the Hebrew reads: "From palaces of ivory (cp. 1 Kgs. 22³⁹, Am. 3¹⁵, "house of ivory") strings rejoice thee", which is a curious phrase—in any case it could be a question of only one palace—and implies that the sound of the strings reached the king from within; but obviously on such an occasion as this the music would take place in the presence of the king; for the emendation *harps* (lit. "instruments") of *ivory*, we are indebted to Gunkel; the Hebrew words for "palaces" and "instruments" are very similar. And, finally, the poet points to the royal bride, *the daughter of kings*, in reference to a long line of kings, who has *come forth to greet him*, and now stands in the place of honour at the king's *right-hand*; a *queen*, apparelled in *gold-gear from Ophir*. This leads the poet to address the royal bride. 10-13. The import of his opening words here may strike us as hardly becoming, considering the respective positions of the singer and the royal personage addressed; to this there is, however, a two-fold reply: the court-poet would naturally be one who was held in high honour, and who could, therefore, speak in terms which in the mouth of anyone else would be unseemly; that he was also privileged as being comparatively advanced in years may be gathered from the words: *Hear, O daughter*. But more important is the fact that he

is expressing the thoughts of the king in saying: *Forget thy people and thy father's house*; and especially when, seeing the queenly bride somewhat abashed by the royal bridegroom's ardent glances, he adds: *Let him desire thy beauty, for he is thy lord*. Having, then, spoken, as it were, on behalf of the king, he goes on to offer words of homage on his own part to the queen; let her deign to accept the royal gifts, and the costly offerings from foreign lands. The text of the next two verses, 14, 15, is very corrupt; for our rendering we are indebted to Gunkel's emendation, though even this does not entirely overcome all the difficulties; presumably the poet's words are addressed indirectly to the maids-of-honour in attendance on the queen. Finally (16, 17), the poet turns once more to the king, and, in ancient Oriental fashion, which sounds a little indelicate to our ears, heralds the advent of the royal progeny, whom the king will *make princes in all the earth*, a poetical exaggeration quite natural to the Oriental. In his closing words the poet glories in the thought that by means of his song *the peoples will praise the king for ever*.

The subject-matter of this psalm does not call for a section on religious teaching.

PSALM 46

JUST as some psalms are seen by their form and content to be of the Wisdom type of literature, so some others, by their thought and phraseology, show themselves as belonging to the apocalyptic or eschatological type. Of these latter the psalm before us is a striking example. In so far as apocalyptic ideas and pictures appear in the Old Testament they are confined almost wholly to the prophetic books; and their various occurrences in the *Psalms* must be regarded primarily as signs of the influence of prophetic teaching. It is noteworthy that in our psalm familiarity with apocalyptic ideas is taken for granted. As is well known, these were taken over and adapted by the prophets from Babylonian mythology, and in later days modified and added to in accordance with Iranian beliefs; in our psalm, however, no signs of the latter appear. The adapted apocalyptic *traits* which occur are the following: the destruction of the earth at the end of the present world-order, this is preparatory to the bringing back of the primeval "Golden Age"; the combat between the gods and the powers of evil, *i.e.*, Tiamat and her helpers, identified with the sea; and the final victory of the gods headed by Marduk. The prophets, while accepting these as foreshadowing what would actually take place, interpreted them as follows: the destruction of the earth was necessary

because it was polluted by wickedness; Tiamat and her helpers symbolized the wicked nations; the rôle of Marduk was transferred to Yahweh; the return of the "Golden Age" meant the setting-up of the rule of Yahweh on a renovated earth. It is worth observing how in the later apocalyptic literature the fundamental ideas of this eschatological drama receive expression, though some modifications, due to other extraneous influences, appear. For example, in the "Vision of the Man from the Sea", Ezra Apocalypse (2 (4), Esdras in the Apocrypha) 13¹⁻¹³, the Seer relates: "And I beheld, and, lo, this wind caused to come up from the midst of the sea as it were the likeness of a man; and I beheld, and, lo, that man flew with the clouds of heaven." This is the heavenly Messiah, God's representative, whose coming up from the midst of the sea implies his victory over the powers of evil. Against him there is gathered "a multitude of men, out of number, from the four winds of heaven, to make war against the man that came out of the sea"; these are the nations of the world, and they are destroyed by "the flaming breath" of the man from the sea. Thereupon the heavenly Messiah ascends upon a great mountain, *i.e.*, the abode of the divine ruler in the kingdom. And, finally, a "peaceable multitude" comes unto the divine ruler, indicating those subjects who are worthy of the kingdom. Thus, though in form the apocalypticist's vision differs from the psalmist's picture, the underlying conceptions are the same.

That in their transfigured form the psalmist believed in the literal fulfilment of these happenings at the end of the world is not to be doubted; as well contend that the apocalyptists did not believe what they prophesied. It was just because the psalmist was so convinced that these things would come to pass that he encouraged and heartened his people during a present emergency by reminding them of the ultimate victory of Yahweh; hence the triumphant refrain: "Yahweh Zebaoth is with us, our strong-tower is the God of Jacob". What particular emergency was in question the psalm gives no help in determining.

The developed form of the eschatological picture points to a late post-exilic date; but the underlying traditional conceptions are, of course, ancient.

The metre is somewhat irregular, but short two-beat half-lines predominate.

For the Precentor : Belonging to the sons of Qorah. According to 'Alamoth. A Song.

- 1 (2). God is our refuge and strength,
 ° fully proved °;
2 (3). Therefore we fear not
 if the earth ° be dissolved °,
 And the mountains be cast
 into the midst of ° the sea °;
3 (4). ° The sea roareth °,
 its waters are troubled.

Mountains quake at its haughty pride ;
 ° Yahweh Zebaoth is with us, our strong-tower is the God of Jacob. °
Selah.

- 4 (5). A river ! its streams
 make glad God's-city,
 Holiest of the dwellings of the Most High ;
 5 (6). God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved,
 God will help her
 before the morn.
 6 (7). Nations rage,
 kingdoms are moved ;
 He uttereth his voice,
 the earth is dissolved.
 7 (8). Yahweh Zebaoth is with us, our strong-tower is the God of Jacob.
 8 (9). Come, behold,
 the works of Yahweh,
 Who hath brought desolations on the earth,
 9 (10). Causing wars to cease
 to the end of the world ;
 He breaketh the bow,
 and knappeth the spear,
 ° The shields ° he burneth with fire.
 10 (11). " Let be, and know that
 I am God,
 Exalted among the nations,
 exalted on the earth.
 11 (12). Yahweh Zebaoth is with us, our strong-tower is the God of Jacob.
Selah.

Text-critical Notes

1. Lit. " to be much found ". 2. Read הַמַּיִם הַזֵּהִי for הַמַּיִם, " changed ". Read הַמַּיִם for הַמַּיִם, " waters ". 3. Read הַמַּיִם הַזֵּהִי for הַמַּיִם, " they roar ". Add, following most commentators, the refrain. 9. Read, with G, עֲגִלּוֹת for עֲגִלּוֹת, " carts ".

1, 2. The dominant thought of the psalm is expressed in the opening words: *God is our refuge and strength*, an affirmation of faith in him who is the one reliable stay and support in adverse times, *a help in trouble*; the Hebrew phrase which we have rendered *fully proved* is difficult to reproduce in translation, but this seems to be the sense intended; experience had shown how often God's help had been forthcoming. The psalmist, representing his people, *our refuge and strength*, thus indicates that a national emergency has arisen; and, like a true patriot, generates confidence in his people by directing their thoughts to the one infallible source of strength and help. In doing this he recalls the prophecies, uttered in the past, concerning the world-catastrophe which is to take place at the end of the days, and pictures the time when the God of Israel, in overwhelming might, will manifest his power over all creation. Just as in that day Israel will have no need to fear, so now fear is excluded, for it is their God who is their help both then and now. The psalmist thereupon repeats some of the ancient conceptions regarding the final world-catastrophe (2, 3); these had been utilized by the prophets, and it is their words which the psalmist takes as the basis for his own; to realize this, one has but to read such passages as Isa. 24^{5, 6, 19, 20}, Hag. 2^{6, 21}; cp.

also Ps. 89⁹. But the cataclysm pictured can have no terror for the people of God, for *Yahweh Zebaoth is with us, our strong-tower is the God of Jacob*; in the Hebrew text this refrain does not figure here, but that its omission is a copyist's oversight is exceedingly probable; the strophic balance of the psalm demands it. For the title *Yahweh Zebaoth*, the "Lord of Hosts", cp. Ps. 24¹⁰, Mal. 1¹⁴; the hosts meant originally the heavenly hosts, later they were made to refer to the armies of Israel.

4, 5. A new picture now rises up before the psalmist's mental vision; it is also eschatological, but has its bearing on the present. The sudden and abrupt exclamation, *A river*, was full of meaning to those of the psalmist's day, and they were many, who were conversant with the prophetic writings. There is in this connexion a striking eschatological passage in Isa. 33¹³⁻²⁴; it has some cryptic allusions, and the text appears to have been worked over; but the central thought is clear enough, for it tells of the kingdom of righteousness and peace when Yahweh will be judge and law-giver and king; then "thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation . . . a place of broad rivers and streams." This is the picture which was in the psalmist's mind; a strange picture indeed when one thinks of the position of Jerusalem on a hill; it was, however, a familiar eschatological conception which occurs in other prophetic books, see especially Ezek. 47; in another eschatological passage, Joel 3 (4), it is said that "a fountain shall come forth of the house of Yahweh, and shall water the valley of Shittim" (v. 18). How this conception persisted among the apocalyptists is evident from the striking words in Rev. 22^{1, 2}: "And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God . . ."; that is in "the holy city, new Jerusalem" (21²). This, then, is the *river* of which the psalmist thinks, whose *streams make glad God's-city, holiest of the dwellings of the Most High*. 5. That city is invulnerable, for *God is in the midst of her* . . .; 6. in vain do the *nations rage*, for *God uttereth his voice, the earth is dissolved* (cp. Ps. 76⁸, Jer. 25^{30, 31}, Joel 2¹¹, 3 (4)¹⁶). 7. The refrain follows. 8, 9. A further eschatological picture describes the end of war, and with that the beginning of the reign of eternal peace is implied, though not actually stated (cp. Isa. 2^{2, 3}). Then the Almighty speaks: *Let be, and know that I am God, exalted among the nations, exalted on earth* (cp. Isa. 2^{11, 17}, 33¹⁰). With the exultant refrain the psalm closes.

Religious Teaching

Eschatological *traits* occur in some of the psalms already dealt with (2, 9, 18), but we have here for the first time one which is definitely eschatological throughout.

To the Jewish teachers the fundamental significance of eschatological beliefs centred in the final victory of Yahweh over all the nations of the world, and in their subjection to him and their acknowledgement of his sovereignty. Whatever meaning the catastrophic elements may have had originally in the extraneous centres from which they were borrowed, to the prophets, and following them, to the psalmists, the destruction of the world was interpreted as a necessary condition of, and prelude to, Yahweh's universal rule; and this because of the innate evil believed to exist not only in the bulk of humanity, but also in all creation (cp. Rom. 8²⁰⁻²²); the spirit of the powers of evil permeated the material world as well as the hearts of men. That the Dualism inherent in this conception (cp. the Iranian belief in Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu) never affected Jewish monotheistic belief was simply due to the fact that the Jewish teachers ignored the obvious deduction to be drawn from the belief in the existence of the two opposed powers of good and evil. But the instinct which ignored this deduction was a right one; for however difficult it was to account for the origin of evil, its presence was indisputable; and the belief in its final destruction by Yahweh proclaimed the eternal truth that he in whom is centred the divine attribute of righteousness must gain the ultimate victory. This is the essence of the religious teaching of this psalm.

PSALM 47

THIS psalm, like that which precedes it, belongs to the "Enthronement" group, and is eschatological in content, though it deals only with the culminating act of the eschatological drama.¹ It pictures the time when, after the elimination of all evil elements, the Kingdom of God will be established on earth; Yahweh, having ascended upon his throne amid the shouts of praise of all nations, is become King over all the world. Such a psalm would be appropriately sung at the festival during which was celebrated Yahweh's ascent upon his throne (see further on this, pp. 48 f). As in the preceding psalm, the actual present is envisaged in the light of the ideal future. Like all the psalms the subject-matter of which is eschatological, the influence of prophetic teaching appears prominently (see further, p. 92).

In conception, as probably in its original composition, the psalm is pre-exilic, though it has undergone some slight modification in

¹ According to *Sopherim* xix. 2, it was the special psalm for the New Year Festival.

course of time; in its present form, however, it may be assigned to the Greek period.

The metre is variable, with telling effect.

1. *For the Precentor : Of the Sons of Qorah. A Psalm.*

- 1 (2). O clap your hands, all ye people,
Shout unto God
with the voice of triumph;
2 (3). For Yahweh, the Most High, is terrible,
A great King
over all the earth;
3 (4). He subdueth peoples under us, and nations under our feet;
4 (5). °He enlargeth° for us our in- heritance, the pride of Jacob whom he loveth. Selah.
5 (6). God ascendeth with a shout, Yahweh with a blast of the ram's-horn.
6 (7). Sing praises to God, sing praises, sing praises to our King, sing praises;
7 (8). For °Yahweh is become King ° sing to God a choice-song;
°over° all the earth,
8 (9). °Yahweh ° is become King over the nations, °he sitteth upon his holy throne;
°with° the people of the God of
9 (10). The princes of the peoples are gathered together Abraham;
For to God belong
°the rulers ° of the earth;
He is greatly exalted |

Text-critical Notes

4. Read יִבְחַר for יִרְחֹב, "he chooseth". 7. Read מְלִיךָ יְהוָה for מְלִיךָ, "king"; add with many MSS., עַל. 8. Read יְהוָה for אֱלֹהִים, "God". Om. אֱלֹהִים. 9. Add, with GS, עַם. Read יִגְדֹּר (cp. G), for מְגִנֵּי, "shields".

1-4. The eschatological character of the psalm is announced in the opening sentence; for *all peoples* would not be called upon to *clap* their *hands* and *shout unto God* unless they had all been subdued by Yahweh (see v. 3), and this is just one of the main themes of the eschatological drama (cp. Ps. 66¹⁻⁴). The future is, in the usage of the prophets, envisaged as present. The clapping of the hands was, in the first instance, an accompaniment to the ritual dance (cp. the primitive cymbals mentioned in the notes to Ps. 150); in later times the phrase was used figuratively as an expression of joy, e.g., Ps. 98⁸, and Isa. 55¹², "and all the trees of the fields shall clap their hands". In this latter sense it is used here. But the triumphant joy, in the circumstances pictured, is not incompatible with holy awe, for *Yahweh, the Most High, is terrible*, i.e., awe-inspiring (cp. Ps. 66³). For the thought of Yahweh as a great King over all the earth, cp. Zech. 14⁹, Mal. 1¹⁴. The supremacy of Israel in the last times, indicated in the words, *He subdueth peoples under us, and nations under our feet*, is a frequent theme in prophetic eschatology (e.g., Isa. 49²³, 60¹⁰⁻¹⁶); similarly the prophecy of the extension, beyond the land of Canaan, of Israel's *inheritance, the pride of Jacob* (e.g., Isa. 26¹⁵, 54³, Zech. 10¹⁰); but both of these ideas are later eschatological *traits*.

5-9. That this psalm was sung during the festival of Tabernacles

in celebration of Yahweh's ascent upon his throne comes out clearly in the words, God *ascendeth with a shout*, and in *v.* 8; the "shout" is a technical ritual term, used like *the blast of the horn*, *i.e.*, the ram's horn, on the occasion of the ascent upon his throne of an earthly king (*e.g.*, 1 Kgs. 1³⁹). The repetition of the call to *sing praises* is very effective; in a less pointed form such repetitions occur in Pss. 57¹, 75^{1, 4, 5}. The term *choice-song* (*maskil*) occurs in the titles of fourteen psalms. Most fittingly does the psalm conclude with the picture of Yahweh sitting *upon his holy throne*, before which the *princes of the peoples*, joined to *the people of the God of Abraham*, are gathered together; there is but one Ruler on earth, and to him are subject all other rulers, thus *he is greatly exalted*.

Religious Teaching

On the significance in general of the eschatological-apocalyptic elements in the *Psalms*, see the last section of the preceding psalm, and also pp. 92 ff.

PSALM 48

THE nature and content of this psalm have been differently interpreted by commentators; and it must be recognized that there is a good deal to be urged in favour of each of the two main interpretations put forward. The glorification of Jerusalem, with which the psalm opens, and the dispersal of foes who had assembled against it, which is then dealt with, suggest that some historical event prompted the composition of the psalm. Jerusalem, "the city of the great King", has been delivered from some impending danger, and its protection is ascribed to Yahweh, who is "great", and who has manifested himself as its protector; hence, as the psalmist says, "God doth establish it for ever". This seems to echo the prophet Isaiah's teaching on the inviolability of Jerusalem: "As birds flying, so will Yahweh Zebaoth protect Jerusalem; he will protect and deliver it, he will pass over and preserve it" (Isa. 31⁵). But these words are uttered in reference to the defence against the Assyrian attack, for in *vv.* 8, 9 it is said further: "Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of man; and the sword, not of men, shall devour him; and he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall become tributary. And his rock shall pass away by reason of terror, and his princes shall be dismayed at the ensign, saith Yahweh, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem." The prophet is here referring to the siege of Jerusalem by the army of Sennacherib

(701 B.C.), of which it is said further (Isa. 37³³⁻³⁷): "Therefore thus saith Yahweh concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come unto this city. . . . By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and he shall not come unto this city, saith Yahweh. For I will defend this city to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. And the angel of Yahweh went forth, and smote the camp of the Assyrians. . . . So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed. . . ." Read in the light of this, as it appeared, miraculous deliverance of Jerusalem, and of the prophet's conviction of its inviolability, there is much in favour of a historical interpretation of our psalm, and there are various incidental allusions which support this (see the exegetical notes). On the other hand, there is a good deal in the psalm which justifies an eschatological interpretation. Thus, the presence of the divine ruler on his holy hill (Jerusalem), and the onslaught of the nations and their discomfiture, are regular eschatological themes; in the apocalyptic literature we have a parallel, for example, in the "Vision of the Man from the Sea", in the *Exra Apocalypse* (2 (4) Esdras 13¹⁻¹³); see further on this the introductory section to Ps. 46, cp. Mic. 4¹¹, Zech. 3⁸. Again, the idea of the mount of God lying in the farthest north is a mythological *trait* taken over by the apocalyptists; it finds an echo, e.g., in Isa. 14¹³, cp. Isa. 2², Mic. 4¹. And once more, the description of Zion as "the joy of all the earth" transcends any conceivable historical conditions; it is another apocalyptic conception. It cannot, therefore, be denied that the psalm contains eschatological elements. There is, thus, justification for each of the interpretations mentioned.

If it be asked, then, in what sense the psalm is to be understood, it must be said that to adopt one of the interpretations mentioned to the exclusion of the other is a mistake; both interpretations must be accepted; an actual historical event forms the basis, and this is idealized and presented as a picture of what will take place at the final consummation. In principle it may be compared with Ps. 46 and Isa. 14.

The last three verses of the psalm bear out the historical interpretation, for they evidently refer to a procession round the city as an act of thanksgiving for its deliverance from the enemy. To assign a date is difficult; we are inclined to regard it as a pre-exilic psalm worked over in post-exilic times.

The metre is mostly 3 : 2, but in vv. 1, 2 it is 2 : 2 : 2; in the last lines of vv. 2 and 8 it is 3 : 3.

1. *A Song. A Psalm. Of the Sons of Korah.*

1 (2). Great is Yahweh,
And highly to be praised
In the city of our God,
° on ° his holy hill,

- 2 (3). A beautiful height,
the joy of all the earth ;
The hill of Zion, farthest-limit of
the north,
3 (4). God within her palaces
4 (5). For, lo, the kings assembled,
5 (6). They beheld; then were they
terrified,
6 (7). Trembling took hold of them
there,
7 (8). ° As the east wind ° ° wrecketh °
8 (9). Like as we have heard, so have we
seen,
In the city of Yahweh Zebaoth °,
9 (10). We have thought, O God, of thy
love,
10 (11). ° As that which we have heard of
thee °, O God,
Thy right-hand is full of righteous-
ness,
Let the daughters of Judah be
glad,
12 (13). Go round about Zion, and en-
compass her,
13 (14). ° Take well heed of ° ° her
rampart °,
That ye may tell to a future
generation
Our God for ever and ever,
- the city of the Great King.
hath made himself known as a refuge ;
° united ° together,
dismayed, put in fear ;
anguish, as of a woman in travail ;
the ships of Tarshish.
° in the city of our God,
God doth establish it for ever. Selah.
in the midst of thy temple :
so is thy praise, ° to ° the ends of the
earth ;
11 (12). let the hill of Zion rejoice ;
because of thy judgements.
tell the number of her towers.
go through her palaces,
14 (15). that this is God,
he will guide us °.

Text-critical Notes

1. Add על. Read קָבְרָה for קָבְרָה "they passed by." 7. Read, with some MSS. "קָרַח" for קָרַח. Lit. "breaketh in pieces." 8. The rhythm demands that these two half-lines should be transposed as above; the Hebr. text has them in the reverse order. 10. Read קָשַׁמְעָה for קָשַׁמְעָה "as thy name". Read עַד for עַל, "upon", 13. Lit. "set your heart". Read, with many MSS., cp. G, חֵילָהּ for חֵילָהּ. "a rampart". 14. Om. עַל-מָוֶת, "concerning death"; see title of Ps. 9.

1, 2. The close association of Yahweh with the holy city naturally enough finds frequent expression both in the psalms and elsewhere, see, e.g., Pss. 9⁹⁻¹¹, 14⁷, 46⁴⁻⁷, 76¹⁻⁴, Isa. 12⁴⁻⁶, Jer. 17^{12, 13}. Here the special significance of that association lies in the fact that the psalmist commemorates the deliverance of Jerusalem from peril through what was believed to have been the intervention of Yahweh, as the context indicates. Hence the opening words: *Great is Yahweh, and highly to be praised in the city of our God* (cp. Pss. 46⁴, 87^{2, 3}, Isa. 60¹⁴); it is his presence there which sanctifies and beautifies the very hill on which the city stands; so that besides being *holy*, it is *a beautiful height*. The description of it as *the joy of all the earth* may be merely poetical hyperbole; but it is much more likely that current eschatological thought in regard to it was employed; for it is further spoken of as being in *the farthest-limit of the north*. The reference here is to a widely-spread apocalyptic conception (cp. Isa. 14¹³, Ezek. 1⁴); one of the most striking accounts of it occurs in the *Book of Enoch* 24, 25; the mountain lies in the north (cp. 18⁶⁻¹⁰, 24²), and the Seer is told by the archangel Michael that "this high mountain which thou hast seen, whose

summit is like the throne of God, is his throne, where the holy Great One, the Lord of Glory, the eternal King, will sit, when he shall come down to visit the earth with goodness" (25³). This is the conception which the psalmist envisages, and applies to the hill of Zion, identified with Jerusalem, *the city of the Great King*, for this title cp. Pss. 47², 95³, and see Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos* . . ., pp. 307 f. (1895). 3-7. In these verses again, eschatological ideas are brought to bear, present history being coloured by the prophetic conceptions of the last times. The historical event in the psalmist's mind may well have been the siege of Jerusalem in 701 B.C. by the army of Sennacherib, of which mention has been made above. The sudden and wholly unexpected withdrawal of the enemy from before the walls of the city was a sure proof to the psalmist that *God was within her palaces*, and had shown his power, having *made himself known as a refuge*, or protection. The eschatological picture is then applied to the enemy that had surrounded the city. It would be unreasonable to look for exact correspondence here; traditional eschatology pictured *the kings* of the earth who would *assemble* and join themselves together to fight the divine ruler (cp. Isa. 13⁴); in the present event only the Assyrian king was in question, and apparently he was not present in person at the siege. But such differences in detail would not affect the central fact. The description of the terror of the oncoming foes is partly eschatological, and partly the product of the psalmist's vivid imagination. According to the former, the very sight of the divine conqueror inspires the enemies with terror and dismay (cp. 2 (4) Esdras 13⁸); to this the psalmist adds the prophetic picture of their *anguish* being *as of a woman in travail* (cp. Isa. 13⁸). Not altogether *à propos* is the psalmist's own conception of the broken enemy with the *ships of Tarshish* wrecked by the east wind; but his desire is to present a picture of entire destruction. *Tarshish* was the Phœnician colony in Spain; ships of special build were required for making this long journey. 8-11. In these verses the historical picture alone is presented, without eschatological allusions. The prophetic utterances concerning Jerusalem were those which had been handed down and *heard* by the people (e.g., Am. 1², Isa. 2²⁻⁴, Mic. 4¹⁻³, cp. also 1 Kgs. 11³², 14²¹), they *have* now been *seen* to be true; this was indeed a city which *God* had *established for ever*. The divine act of deliverance compelled pondering upon God's love, especially when the people gathered together for worship; in their name, therefore, the prophet says: *We have thought, O God, of thy love in the midst of thy temple*; in accordance with what they had heard of him, so is their offering of *praise* to him; and that not only in Jerusalem, but also *to the ends of the earth*; this may be an eschatological echo; but if so, it is adapted to apply to the chosen people wherever they may be. The thought

impels the psalmist himself to utter the words of praise: *Thy right-hand is full of righteousness, i.e., the right-hand, which is the instrument of action, brings about righteous deeds* (cp. Pss. 77^{10, 11}, 98¹); therefore it is fitting that not only *the hill of Zion* should *rejoice*, but also all the *daughter-cities of Judah* (cp. Pss. 69^{35, 36}, 97⁸); the divine *judgements* are right decisions. 12, 13. Finally, the grateful people are called upon to form a procession, the ritual act of thanksgiving, *round about Zion*, and thus convince themselves that though the enemy had been before it, by the mercy of God no harm had been done; *towers, rampart, palaces*, all are intact. This is something to be told *to a future generation*, for it is God's doing, *our God for ever and ever*; all confidence must ever be placed in him, for *he will guide us*.

Religious Teaching

The two central themes are the place of eschatological thought in the beliefs of Israel, which has been dealt with under Ps. 46; and the prophetic doctrine of Yahweh as the God of History; for this latter see pp. 81 ff.

PSALM 49

THIS is a psalm of the Wisdom type. Its central theme is the denunciation of the wealthy, regarded as ungodly. Not that the Sage describes the possession of wealth, as such, to be sinful; what he denounces is its misuse and the bad effect it has on so many by engendering self-indulgence, with its accompanying vices, a false sense of security, and pride. While the evidence suggests that the rich were but too often of godless character, it is impossible to believe that those of the type of Zacchæus did not exist (see Lk. 19⁸). But it is only the former that the Sage has in mind.

That the text has undergone some serious corruption is evident; the thought-sequence is not always logical, and that some additions have been made to the original text does not admit of doubt.

The metre is 3 : 3.

1. For the Precentor : Of the Sons of Qorah. A Psalm.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 (2). Hear this, all ye peoples, | give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world, |
| 2 (3). Both of low degree and high degree, | rich and poor together. |
| 3 (4). My mouth shall speak wisdom, | my heart's musing is of understanding. |
| 4 (5). ° Incline your ear ° to a parable, | I will solve my dark saying with the harp. |
| 5 (6). Wherefore should I fear in the evil days, | (when) the iniquity of ° mine enemies ° encompasseth me, |
| 6 (7). Who trust in their wealth, | and boast of the abundance of their riches ? |

- 7 (8). ° But ° no man ° can buy himself
off °
8 (9). ° [Precious is the redemption of
his soul °
9 (10). And live ° for ever and ever, °
10 (11). For he seeth that wise men die,
nor pay a ransom to God,
he must cease from that for ever.] °
and never see the Pit.
both the foolish ° and intelligent °
perish,
And leave their wealth to others.
11 (12). ° Graves ° are their houses ever-
more,
their dwelling-places for ever and ever.
They call ° their lands their own °.
12 (13). But man abideth not in honour,
he is like the beasts that perish;
13 (14). This is ° the fate ° (of them) that
and ° their latter end ° (of those) ° who
are so confident,
boast with their lips °. Selah.
14 (15). ° Like a flock of Sheol are they
death is their shepherd, and hath
destroyed,
dominion over them;
In the field of Abaddon is their
resting-place,
in the belly of Sheol is their dwelling °;
15 (16). But God will redeem my soul
from the power of Sheol, for he will
receive me. Selah.
16 (17). ° Look not ° upon one if he become
rich,
if ° he increase ° the glory of his house,
17 (18). ° For at his death he will take
nothing away °
his glory will not descend after him.
18 (19). Though while he liveth he blesseth
° and men praise him because it goeth
his soul,
well with him °,
19 (20). ° He will go ° to the generation of
his fathers,
and ° he shall never see ° light.
20 (21). Man ° abideth not ° in honour,
he is like the beasts that perish.

Text-critical Notes

4. Read *אָזְנִי לְאָזְנִי* for *אָזְנִי לְאָזְנִי*, "I will incline mine ear". 5. Read *עַקְבִּי*, lit. "they that over-reach me" for *עַקְבִּי*, "my heels". 7. Read, with many MSS., *אָחִי* for *אָחִי*, "brother". Read *יִפְדֶּה* lit. "will redeem himself," for *יִפְדֶּה*, "will by any means redeem". 8. This is a marginal note which has found its way into the text. Read *נַפְשִׁי* for *נַפְשִׁי*, "their soul". 9. Read *וְעַד* for *וְעַד* for the rhythm's sake. 10. Read *וְנִבְּלָן* for *וְנִבְּלָן*, "and brutish man". 11. Read, cp. GS, *קָרְבָּם* for *קָרְבָּם*. Read, cp. G, *עַל אֲדָמוֹתָם*, "they call with their names over lands". 13. Lit. "way". Read *אַחֲרֵיהֶם* for *אַחֲרֵיהֶם*, "after them". Lit. "they are pleased with their mouth". 14. The hopelessly corrupt state of this verse necessitates a somewhat drastic emendation; the following is suggested:

מִנְתָּ יִרְעֶם וַיִּרְדָּם בָּם
בְּשִׁדָּה אֲבִדוֹן מִרְבָּצָם
לְבָטֶן שְׂאוֹל מִזִּבְחָם

For the expression *שְׂאוֹל*, see Jon. 2³.

16. Read *אַל-תִּירָא*, lit. "look not", i.e., with envy, for *אַל-תִּירָא*, "be not afraid". Read *וְיִרְדָּה* for *וְיִרְדָּה*. 17. Read *וְיִרְדָּה* for *וְיִרְדָּה*. 18. Read *לֹא יִשָּׁב לִי* for *לֹא יִשָּׁב לִי*, "and men praise thee because thou causest to do well to thyself". 19. Read *וְיָבֵל* for *וְיָבֵל*, "thou wilt go". Read *לֹא יִרְאֶה* for *לֹא יִרְאֶה*, "they shall . . .". 20. Read *וְיִבְיֶן* (v. 12) for *וְיִבְיֶן*, "and he understandeth not".

1-3. Since in this psalm the subject dealt with is one which is universally applicable, the psalmist addresses himself to *all ye peoples*, and to those of every degree. He is about to *speak wisdom*, for his thoughts have been concentrated on that which is *of understanding*.

4. To all men it is, therefore, said: *Incline your ear* (cp. Ps. 78¹); they are to listen to a *parable*, or *marshal*, a word which in Hebrew has a

wide sense, such as a popular saying (e.g., 1 Sam. 10¹²), or wise advice (e.g., 1 Kgs. 20¹¹), or a universal truth (e.g., Prov. 16⁹), in fact, what we ordinarily understand as a "proverb"; but it is also used in reference to prophecy (e.g., Num. 24³⁻⁹), and even of an allegory (e.g., Ezek. 17²⁻¹⁰); all these in addition to "parable" as ordinarily understood. The psalmist continues: *I will solve my dark saying with the harp*; the "dark saying" is lit. "a riddle", though not necessarily in our sense; it is often used as a parallel to "parable", as here (cp. Ps. 78²). *I will solve* is lit. "I will open", which can mean either that he will "begin" his dark saying, or that he will "explain" it, to the accompaniment of the *harp*. Nowhere in the Wisdom Literature, or indeed elsewhere in the Old Testament, is there mention of wise sayings being thus accompanied; but it may well have been the practice on special occasions; the words of a song are not less effective for being accompanied by music, much the contrary; the same is true of musical accompaniment to narratives (cp. the Troubadours). The mention of the *harp* here is thus of distinct interest. 5-14. The introductory words to the "parable" which now follow are difficult. We have followed the Hebrew text, but it must be confessed that the words of v. 5 do not read altogether appropriately. At any rate, those whom the psalmist has in mind are they *who trust in their wealth*, and he is concerned to impress upon them the folly of boasting in *the abundance of their riches*, because death will come upon them, as on all others. The words: *But no man can buy himself off, nor pay a ransom to God*, must be understood as a sarcasm; but it was necessary to utter the taunt, and to remind the godless wealthy that death was their lot, because they never called that to mind in the midst of all their worldly enjoyments. V. 8 is an obvious addition to the original text; it is the kind of thought that a pious copyist would have written in the margin of his MS.; a later copyist then inserted the words in the text. The psalmist then brings before the minds of the rich that *graves are their houses for evermore, their dwelling-places for ever and ever*, in glaring contrast to their brief tenure of *their lands which they call their own*, lit. "lands over which they call their name", meaning lands of which they have taken possession. Like all men who *abide not in honour* (cp. Ps. 39⁵), and are *like the beasts that perish* (cp. Eccles. 3¹⁹), this is also the fate, lit. "way", of the self-confident wealthy *who boast with their lips* (a free rendering, see text-critical note). The next verse is hopelessly corrupt; its emendation is at best tentative; no two commentators agree on any emended form; we have tried to keep as closely as possible to the Hebrew text (see text-critical note), but we regard our emendation merely as *faute de mieux*; all that can be claimed is that in a general sense it probably approximates to what was originally meant. The next verse, 15, reads like words put into the mouth of the psalmist by a

copyist. 16-20. These closing verses, addressed apparently to a disciple of the psalmist, are merely a repetition of the thoughts already expressed. The text, with the exception of the last verse which repeats v. 12, is again very corrupt, and commentators are not in agreement as to how they should be emended. The possibility cannot be excluded that these verses were added by a sage at a later date.

Religious Teaching

As to this, all that can be said is that it proclaims a very necessary truth which is more pointedly set forth in the Parable of the Rich Fool (Lk. 12¹⁸⁻²¹).

PSALM 50

EVEN a cursory reading of this psalm shows how profoundly the writer was influenced by prophetic thought and diction. This will be illustrated by references to the prophetic books in the exegetical notes. Attention may, however, be drawn here to some outstanding prophetic themes which the psalmist utilizes. The mention of the divine utterance with which the psalm opens, the description of the theophany which follows, the relative unimportance of sacrifice as compared with spiritual worship, and the denunciation against the wicked man in the latter part of the psalm; all these are thoroughly in the prophetic vein, and show that our psalmist was wholly in the following of the prophets. This is the most important element in the psalm, and cannot be too strongly emphasized. In the latter part of the psalm there is an earnest protest against reliance on the outward observance of legal precepts without regard to the spirit of their teaching. As a pre-exilic date for the psalm is, for various reasons, out of the question, and as the re-building of the temple has clearly taken place, the psalm must have been written at any rate later than 516 B.C.; indeed there are indications which point to a considerably later date for its composition.

The metre is, with but few exceptions, 3 : 3.

A Psalm. Asaph's.

1. ° Yahweh hath spoken,
And called the earth,
From the rising of the sun,
Unto the going down thereof.
2. From Zion, the crown of beauty hath God appeared,
Our God cometh,
And is not silent.
- A fire before him devoureth, around him it rageth mightily.
4. He calleth to the heavens above, and to the earth, to judge his people :

5. "Gather to me my godly ones,
6. Let the heavens ° declare ° his
righteousness,
7. "Hear, O my people, and I will speak,
God, thy God, am I.
8. Not because of thy sacrifices do I
reprove thee,
9. I desire no bullock out of thine house,
10. For mine are all the beasts of the forest,
11. I know all the fowls of ° the air °,
12. If I were hungry I would not tell thee,
13. Do I eat the flesh of bulls,
14. Sacrifice thanksgiving unto God,
15. And call upon me in the day of trouble,
16. But to the wicked man saith God :
"Is it thine to declare my statutes,
17. Thou that hatest correction,
18. When thou seest a thief ° thou favourest
him °,
19. Thy mouth thou givest to evil,
20. ° Shamefully ° dost thou speak against
thy brother,
21. These things hast thou done, and I was
silent,
I will reprove thee, ° and
22. Give heed to this, ye that forget God,
23. He that sacrificeth a thanksgiving he
honoureth me,
that have made a covenant with me with
sacrifice."
for a God that judgeth is he.
O Israel, and I will testify against thee,
thy burnt-offerings are always before
me.
nor he-goats out of thy fold,
the cattle on the mountains of ° God °;
and whatsoever moveth in the fields is
mine;
for mine is the world and its fulness;
or drink the blood of goats?
and pay to the Most High thy vows;
I will deliver thee, and thou shalt
glorify me."
and to take my covenant on ° thy lips °,
and hast cast my words behind thee?
and with adulterers is thy portion;
and thy tongue frameth deceit;
thy mother's son thou dost slander.
thou thoughtest that I was ° like thee °;
set it before ° thine eyes.
lest I rend you, and none delivereth.
° and he that walketh uprightly, ° I will
show him ° my salvation °."

Text-critical Notes

1. Om. *אל אלהים*, not only because it is out of harmony with the metre, but also because it is an extremely unusual expression for the Deity; it occurs elsewhere only in Josh. 22²², where it is written twice over. The rendering of the RV. marg. "the God of gods" is questionable. 6. Read, with the Versions, *וַיִּדְרִי* for . . . 1. 10. Read *לֶאֱלֶף* for *לֶאֱלֶף*, "a thousand," or "cattle". 11. Read, with the Versions, *הַשָּׁמַיִם*, lit. "the heavens" for *הַרִיִּים*, "mountains". 16. Lit. "thy mouth". 18. Read *וְהִתְרַצְתָּ עִיּוֹ* for *וְהִתְרַצְתָּ עִיּוֹ*, "thou consentedst with him", which makes the half-line too long. 20. Read, with several commentators, *בְּשִׁטָּה*, lit. "shame," for *הִתְשַׁבְּ*, "thou sittest". 21. Om. *הֵייתָ*, "to be"; and read with S, *וְאֶעֱרֹכָה*, expressing the pronoun, for *וְאֶעֱרֹכָה*. 23. Read, with several commentators, *וְהָם לְרֶגֶל* for *וְהָם לְרֶגֶל*, "he that prepareth a way". Read *וְיִשְׁעִי* for *וְיִשְׁעֵי אֱלֹהִים*, "with the salvation of God".

1-6. The conception of the theophany here described is derived, in the first instance, from Exod. 22, especially *vs.* 16-18; there are also various points of contact with Deut. 32, 33. From east to west (cp. Mal. 1¹¹) Yahweh has *called the earth*; i.e., the inhabitants of the earth, to hear the words which he is about to utter to his people. It is noticeable that only the *earth* is called, as in Mic. 1², 6²; in other passages in which Yahweh is represented as uttering a judgement against his people, such as Deut. 4²⁶, 32¹, Isa. 1², the heavens also are called, cp. Isa. 48¹³; this omission is not without reason; it is a universalistic *trait*; though Israel alone is addressed, all men are to be listeners; the Almighty thus proclaims that he is the God of all the human race; the mention of the heavens would, therefore, be inappropriate.

The theophany is transferred from Sinai to Zion, *the crown of beauty*, an expression which occurs in Lam. 2¹⁵ in reference to Jerusalem. When it is said: *He calleth to the heavens above* this does not gainsay the remark just made because it is a new train of thought with which the psalmist is now occupied. The words: *Gather to me my godly ones* are not addressed to the heavens and the earth, but to the *godly ones* themselves; here we have again the mention of the *Hasidim* (see further, pp. 56 ff.), *that have made a covenant with me with sacrifice*; the covenant was originally made at Horeb (Exod. 24⁵), but it was confirmed by all lovers of Yahweh whenever they came to worship him with their offerings. The favourable acceptance of sacrifice here must be read in connexion with what is said in the verses which follow. 7-15. The people are called upon to *Hear*, a thoroughly prophetic mode of address when an indictment uttered by Yahweh is recorded (e.g., Isa. 1^{2, 10}, 28¹⁴, 48¹, Jer. 2⁴, Mic. 3¹); it is solemnly added: *God, thy God, am I* (cp. Isa. 42⁸, 43¹⁵). It must be noted that it is the wrong motive in offering sacrifices that the psalmist condemns here, not sacrifices as such: *Not because of thy sacrifices do I reprove thee*, and see v. 5; the real point of condemnation is contained in the words of v. 13: *Do I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?* By these words the psalmist repudiates the traditional belief that the Deity consumed his share of a sacrifice. The purpose of their being burned was that the ascending smoke should reach the heavens, and the essence of the flesh was thus thought to be consumed; the blood, again, was poured out at the foot of the altar, or sprinkled upon it, with the idea that the Deity, invisibly present in or on the altar, somehow absorbed it. One of the fundamental purposes of sacrifices was thus to give nourishment to the Deity, and, through the blood, to convey to him the life-principle (Lev. 17¹¹). To eradicate the quaint old-world materialistic conception of God was what the psalmist was aiming at; hence all that is said in vv. 9-13. The time had not yet come for the abrogation of the sacrificial system; but this psalmist was preparing men's minds for this; hence his words: *Sacrifice thanksgiving unto God, i.e., the contemplation of purely spiritual sacrifice*; it is sufficient to *call upon God* when in trouble, *he will deliver*, and the thankful recipient of God's mercy will *glorify* him. 16-23. Having thus exhorted those who worshipped God, though in an inadequate way, the psalmist now turns *to the wicked man*, and in burning words enumerates the sins of which he is guilty; how dare such a one pretend to be righteous: *Is it thine to declare my statutes, and to take my covenant upon thy lips?* The type of Jew whom the psalmist here rebukes was he who by outward observance of legal precepts held that he did all that was needful, and was therefore free to give rein to all his evil passions: theft, adultery, lying, and slander. It may be that, in his righteous indignation, the psalmist has a little over-stated the

guilt of the hypocrite; but this type was a terrible danger to true religion, and drastic condemnation was called for. We see here the beginnings of the tendency to regard the fulfilling of the Law in its outward form as procuring justification in the sight of God—an indication, among others, of the comparatively late date of this psalm—this, as is well known, was one of the results of an exaggerated authority accorded to the Law. When the psalmist speaks of God being *silent* he means that no punishment was inflicted on the sinner in question, who, in consequence, assumed that *I was like thee*; obviously, from his point of view, there was no reason why he should be punished; but this just shows the low ebb to which religion had fallen among many; and the superb merit of this and other psalmists, following in the line of the prophets, is that they set their face against spurious, self-deceptive substitutes for religion; sooner or later, in one form or another, the inevitable would come: *I will reprove thee, and set it before thine eyes*. The concluding verse expresses once more the psalmist's ideal of spiritual worship.

Religious Teaching

The central points have already been indicated; they may, however, be briefly recapitulated. The theophanic details of a long-past age cannot, of course, appeal to us as it did to men of bygone times; but it must be recognized that, however weird and erroneous these old-world ideas about the divine appearance on earth may be, they do witness to a very real belief in the might and terribleness of the Almighty. Then we have the ardent advocacy of spiritual worship as distinct from that in which the offering of sacrifices constituted the central element. To champion such an innovation demanded an intensity of religious conviction engendered by a development of conception regarding the Being of God which is very impressive. In not more than two or three other psalms is sacrificial worship contemplated as unnecessary. The teaching that sacrifices as an external form of worship endanger spiritual religion is paralleled by that which protests against the mere external obedience to the letter of the Law without a corresponding observance of its spirit. For its insistence on the true nature of practical religion this psalm stands out as second to none.

PSALM 51

IN this, the most heart-searching of all the penitential psalms, the penitent concentrates his mind upon his state of sinfulness to the exclusion of all thought of surrounding circumstances external to himself. In this particular it differs from all other psalms of a similar nature. For

the realization of the sense of sin, set forth with unflinching candour, it has no equal in the Psalter.

In outward form the psalm is beautifully and skilfully constructed, and reveals most exquisitely the emotions which succeed one another in the penitent's heart: first, the cry to God for mercy; then, confession of sin, uttered in deep contrition; this is followed by prayer for forgiveness, and the resolution of amendment of life; and finally, in certainty that God in his love answers prayer, thanksgiving and praise.

The contention of some commentators that the psalmist is speaking not as an individual, but in the name of the community, can only be described as fantastic; the personal note sounded all through the psalm, culminating in such words as "in iniquity was I brought forth, and in sin did my mother conceive me", should make it abundantly clear that the whole psalm is the outpouring of an individual in reference to himself.

That the psalm was written by David, as the title states, referring to 2 Sam. 11, 12, cannot have been the case; apart from other reasons, in view of his treatment of Uriah, how could David have uttered such words as: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned"? (See, however, the section on *Religious Teaching*.) But it should be obvious, in view of the developed sense of sin so pronounced throughout the psalm, that it must belong to post-exilic times; it was the experience of the Exile which engendered a conception of sin never before realized.

One or two later additions have been made to the psalm; attention to these will be drawn in the exegetical notes.

With two exceptions (*vv.* 1, 11), the metre is uniformly 3 : 3.

1. *For the Precentor: A Psalm. David's; 2. When the prophet Nathan came unto him after he had gone in to Bath-sheba.*

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1 (3). Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness,
According to the abundance of thy tender mercies
Blot out my transgressions.</p> <p>2 (4). Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity,</p> <p>3 (5). For ° I acknowledge ° my transgressions,</p> <p>4 (6). Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,
That thou mightest be justified ° in thy words °</p> <p>5 (7). Behold, in iniquity was I brought forth,</p> <p>6 (8). Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts,</p> <p>7 (9). Purge me with hyssop that I may be clean,</p> <p>8 (10). ° Fill me with ° joy and gladness,</p> <p>9 (11). Hide thy face from my sins,</p> <p>10 (12). Create in me a clean heart, O God,</p> <p>11 (13). Cast me not from thy presence,</p> <p>12 (14). Restore unto me the joy of thy help,</p> | <p>and cleanse me from my sin.</p> <p>and ° confess ° my sin continually.
and done that which is evil in thine eyes,</p> <p>and vindicated when thou judgest.</p> <p>and in sin did my mother conceive me.
and makest me to know wisdom in the innermost being.</p> <p>wash me that I may be whiter than snow.
that the bones which thou hast crushed may rejoice.
and blot out all mine iniquities.
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
and take not thy holy spirit from me;
and sustain me with a willing spirit.</p> |
|---|--|

- 13 (15). Then will I teach transgressors thy ways,
 14 (16). Deliver me ° from silence°, O that my tongue may sing aloud of thy
 God°, righteousness;
 15 (17). O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy
 praise;
 16 (18). For thou delightest not in sacrifice, though I brought a whole-burnt-
 offering ° thou wouldst have no
 pleasure therein °;
 17 (19). ° My sacrifice ° is a broken spirit;
 A heart broken and crushed,
 O God, thou wilt not despise.
 18 (20). In thy favour show good unto mayest thou build the walls of
 Zion, Jerusalem;
 19 (21). Then shalt thou be pleased with then shall they offer bullocks upon
 the sacrifices of righteousness°, thine altar.

Text-critical Notes

3. Read אָדִיעַ for אָדַע, "I know;" and אָנִיד for אָנִי, "before me".
 4. Read, with many MSS. and G, בְּדַבְּרֶיךָ for בְּדַבְּרִיךָ, "when thou speakest".
 8. Read, with S, תִּשְׂבֵּעַנִי, lit. "thou wilt make me satisfied", for תִּשְׂמִיעַנִי, "thou
 makest me to hear". 14. Read, with Gunkel, מִדָּמַי (cp. Ps. 94¹⁷, 115¹⁷, see also
 Ps. 39², 62¹ and especially Hab. 2¹⁹) for מִדָּמַי, "from bloodguiltiness". Om.
 אֱלֹהֵי הַשְׁוֹעָה, "O God of my salvation," which overloads the half-line. 16. Read
 לֹא תִרְצֶה for לֹא תִרְצֶה, "thou wouldst have no pleasure". 17. Read זִבְחֵי
 אֱלֹהִים for זִבְחֵי אֱלֹהֵי, "the sacrifices of God". 19. Om. עֹלָה וְקָלִיל, "a whole burnt-
 offering and a whole burnt-offering;" the two words refer to the same type of
 sacrifice, though in various passages, e.g., 1 Sam. 7⁹, קָלִיל is used in apposition
 to עֹלָה.

For the title, see intr. section.

1, 2. For the true penitent the first impulse is to cry for *mercy* to God against whom sin has been committed. The psalmist's plea has a threefold basis; it implores an exercise of pure generosity, undeserved but freely bestowed, God's *mercy*; it claims the *lovingkindness* which, in a certain sense, is to be expected of God in view of his relation to man; it appeals to the *tender mercies* which are fundamental to his being, as much a part of his spiritual nature as the love of mother or father for the child. The intensity of the psalmist's penitence is shown by the reiterated expressions: *blot out* (cp. Isa. 43²⁵, 44²²), i.e., obliterate, as though recorded in a book; *wash me thoroughly* (cp. Jer. 4¹⁴), lit. "increase, wash me", the word is used mostly of washing garments by treading them (e.g., Exod. 19¹⁰⁻¹⁴); *cleanse me*, used also of purifying metal by rubbing off impurities (e.g., Mal. 3³). His guilt he expresses by the three words, *transgressions*, *iniquity*, *sin*. Thus the consciousness of sinfulness could not be more fully presented.

3-5. The essence of the confession which follows is contained in the words: *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned*; whatever wrong he may have done to men is primarily a sin against God; and since he is guilty before God, the divine *words* of condemnation are *justified*, and the sentence pronounced is *vindicated* (the word means lit. "to be pure" or "clear", cp. Mic. 6¹¹). The sincerity and whole-heartedness of the

psalmist's confession is further emphasized by the acknowledgement that from his very birth his being was evil; this is not intended as an excuse, as though he could not help being sinful, but as the recognition of his innate evil nature, cp. the words of Ps. 58³: "The wicked are estranged from the womb, from birth they utter falsehood". 6-12. The petitions which now follow are prefaced by words which show that the psalmist not only knows what God demands of those who are faithful to him, but also has the conviction that God will grant this: *thou desirest truth in the inward parts*, "truth" must be understood in the sense of faithfulness, as, e.g., in Isa. 38³, and *wisdom*, which God makes known, must be thought of in its highest sense, i.e., the fear of Yahweh. It must, however, be pointed out that some commentators take this verse in connexion with the preceding one, and explain it to mean that the Almighty will reveal to the psalmist the mystery of his sinfulness from birth. The interpretation of the verse is certainly difficult. But, however it is to be understood, the meaning of what follows is plain enough; it is true, the thought-sequence of 7-12 is not quite logical; but that is easily accounted for by the alternating emotions of one in the spiritual condition of the psalmist. In the knowledge of his uncleanness in the sight of God he prays that he will *purge* him with *hyssop*; "purge", lit. "un-sin", is a technical term for ritual purification, cp. Ezek. 45¹⁸; *hyssop* is a wild herb the leaves of which were held to possess cleansing powers (cp. Lev. 14^{4a}); and that he may be washed and become *whiter than snow* (cp. Isa. 1¹⁸); it is, of course, figurative language that is being used. In such a state of purity the psalmist feels justified in praying: *Fill me with joy and gladness*; the text reads "make me to hear", but we have followed the Syriac Version (lit. "satisfy me") on account of the parallel in Ps. 90¹⁴. Figurative language is again used when it is said: *that the bones which thou hast crushed may rejoice* (cp. Pss. 22¹⁴, 102³). Then the thought of his *sins* again predominates, and he prays that God may *hide his face* from them, and *blot out all his iniquities*, that his *heart* may be *clean* and his *spirit steadfast*. In such a spiritual condition he will be able to abide in God's presence. But he still feels uncertain of himself, and prays that God will *not cast him away from his presence nor take his holy spirit from him* (cp. 2 Kgs. 13²³, Ps. 102¹⁰, and Ps. 143¹⁰); and he recalls the time long ago when he had not fallen away from God, and prays: *Restore unto me the joy of thy help, and, as of yore, sustain me with a willing spirit*. 13. As, once more, a faithful servant of God, he will show his repentance by amendment of life, and bear witness for God by teaching *transgressors* and *sinner*s to turn unto him. 14-17. The concluding verses deal with praise to God, and self-dedication to him. The Hebrew text reads in 14: *Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God*; this is so out of harmony with the context that we have adopted Gunkel's suggested

emendation, *Deliver me from silence, O God*; for the similarity of the two words in Hebrew see the text-critical note. The psalmist feels, in his happily restored relationship to God, that to keep silence from praising him would be altogether wrong; his *tongue* must *sing aloud* of his *righteousness*; and so he continues: *O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise*. The psalm closes (16, 17) with one of the most beautiful utterances regarding spiritual worship in the Psalter. Wholly in opposition to the belief and practice of his times, he repudiates the idea of material sacrifices. The text of these verses is a little out of order; but the emendations are fairly obvious. What the psalmist offers is not the whole burnt-offering which was supposed to atone for sin, but himself with his *broken spirit* and *contrite heart*, which God does not despise. On the subject of the repudiation of sacrificial worship in the *Psalms*, see further, Ps. 40.

That the last two verses (18, 19) formed no part of the original psalm is obvious on the face of it; if in 18 there is any reference to a historical event, and if the verse were part of the psalm, there would assuredly have been some hint elsewhere in the psalm of such a terrible catastrophe (*i.e.*, the destruction of Jerusalem) as had happened. The verse is, however, usually interpreted in an eschatological sense (cp. Isa. 26¹, Pss. 102¹³⁻¹⁶, 147^{2, 13}), in reference to the time of the restitution of all things; in this case the verse is even more incongruous in its present position. But it is the final verse (19), with its enthusiastic belief in sacrifices, so utterly different from the spirit of the psalm itself, that definitely marks these verses as a later addition.

Religious Teaching

This has been largely dealt with in what has already been said; but a few points, on account of their far-reaching importance, call for special emphasis, even at the expense of some little repetition. The implication contained in the words, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned," that offences against man are essentially sins against God, is of profound significance. It is a truth only too often lost sight of; yet, were it realized by men in their dealings with one another, how different would be the attitude of even the best towards each other. It is, further, a striking characteristic of this psalm that it contains no word of denunciation against others; its only precise parallel is Ps. 130; very close to it is Ps. 32, but *v.* 9 of that psalm is not quite in the same spirit. The next point is the teaching that sin is inherent in man from birth. For the Jewish doctrine of sin the words of *v.* 5 are of great interest. They have often been taken to imply the doctrine of original sin; that is a mistake; Judaism has never taught this; the idea that Adam's sin in any way affected the status of the human race is quite alien to Jewish teaching. Another important point is that in our psalm, which speaks

so much of sin, nothing is said of suffering or adversity being the result of sin (cp. John 9^{2, 3}). Finally, the words, few though they be, about sacrifices, are of great religious importance, because the implication is that nothing man can do can effect reconciliation with God when he has been sinned against. This cuts away with one stroke the whole doctrine of the merit of works. Into this subject we cannot go further here, but its far-reaching importance will be realized.

PSALM 52

THERE would seem to have been a twofold purpose which prompted the composition of this psalm. It presents, on the one hand, a graphic picture of the bitter resentment felt by the godly man towards one who had no fear of God. The acrimonious words addressed by the writer to the special object of his wrath are palliated by his conviction that his enemy is also the enemy of God. Numerous individuals are, however, in question, and it is probable that they represent, respectively, opposed sections among the people. In the second place, the writer inculcates, at any rate implicitly, the doctrine of divine retribution. This will be further dealt with in the exegetical notes. The abrupt opening of the psalm, as well as its spirit and content, make it difficult to believe that it was ever used liturgically; in any case, it has never been so used in the worship of the Synagogue, as far as one can judge from the evidence.

The date of the psalm is indicated by its content; it belongs to the Greek period.

The metre is almost entirely 3 : 2, the text is in a few instances uncertain.

1. For the Precentor : Maskil of David ; 2. When Doeg the Edomite came and reported to Saul, and said to him, David is come into the house of Ahimelek.

- 1 (3). Why boastest thou thyself in evil, O powerful one, ° against the godly
man °?

All the day 2 (4). thou devisest
destruction.

- 3 (5). Thou lovest evil more than good, lying more than righteousness°. Selah.

- 4 (6). Thou lovest all destructive words, O deceitful tongue.
5 (7). Yea, God will destroy thee for ever ; he will snatch thee away, and pluck thee

- and root thee out of the land of the living. Selah.

- 6 (8). The righteous shall see it and fear; but at him they will laugh:
7 (9). "Behold, the man

7. (9). **Behold, the man
who maketh not
God his strength !**

He trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wealth."

- 8 (10). But, as for me, I am like a green olive-tree
in the house of God;
I trust in the love of God
for ever and ever.

godly man. The alteration of the verse-division here is demanded, otherwise the devising of destruction has *thy tongue* for its subject; but the function of the tongue is utterance, not mental activity. Hence we must read: *thy tongue is like a sharpened razor*, and the added words of the Hebrew text, "working deceitfully", should be omitted, both because they overload the line and because they impute to the tongue that which belongs to the mind. In Ps. 57⁴ the tongue of the godless is likened to "a sharp sword". The word for "razor" has, in Jer. 36²³, the meaning of "knife". In face of the *destructive* (lit. "swallowing up") words of this deceitful tongue, the psalmist sets forth the doctrine of divine retribution. 5-7. This centred in the belief that upon the ungodly divine wrath was always visited in one form or another, while the godly always enjoyed divine favour, manifested by a prosperous life; though contradicted by the facts of life, this doctrine held sway, and appears here, as in various other psalms (e.g., 37^{10, 11}, 49^{16, 17}). Therefore it is said: *God will destroy thee for ever*, and this is described as taking place in three stages: *he will snatch thee away*, the thought is that of snatching up fire from a hearth (cp. Isa. 30¹⁴); *and pluck thee from thy tent*: in Deut. 28⁶³ the word is used of the people being "torn away" from their land; "tent" is sometimes used of an ordinary place of habitation (e.g., Ps. 132³ "the tent of thy house", Isa. 16⁵, Jer. 30¹⁸); *and root thee out of the land of the living*; the godless man thought he was safely rooted in the land (cp. Isa. 40²⁴, Job 5³). It is held by some commentators that this verse (5) is in the nature of a magical curse, the utterance of which, it was believed, would *ipso facto* take effect; it may be so (cp. Ps. 109^{6a}); but we are inclined to believe rather that the words are intended to be a statement of fact, namely, that divine retribution will descend upon the head of the wicked. Such retribution, which, according to the psalmist, will be witnessed by the righteous, naturally inspires them with awe, the *righteous shall see it and fear*, though the foolish delusion of the wicked man may cause them to *laugh* (cp. Ps. 58¹⁰), for worthy of contempt, indeed, is the man who repudiates God, and who trusts *in the abundance of his riches* (cp. Ps. 49⁶), and who looks upon his *wealth* as his strength. 8, 9. But if retribution overtakes the wicked, no less certain is the psalmist's conviction that prosperity will be the lot of him who *trusts in the love of God*. He likens himself, as representing the godly men in general, to a *green olive-tree in the house of God* (cp. Ps. 92¹³); this picture of flourishing strength and beauty is metaphorical, it is difficult to believe that trees grew within the temple enclosure (cp. Ps. 92^{12, 13}); the whole consecrated area could be spoken of as the *house of God*. Within it, *in the presence of thy godly ones*, the psalmist *will thank Yahweh for ever*, i.e., continually (cp. Ps. 89², etc.), for he knows that all has been brought about by the act of God, *for thou hast done it*. Thanksgiving and praise

belong together, hence the proclaiming of the name among those who love him.

The religious teaching of the psalm has already been sufficiently indicated in the exegetical notes.

PSALM 53 (= PSALM 14)

FOR the most part this psalm is identically the same as Ps. 14; the differences are, with one exception, trifling; the exception is v. 5 (6); in both psalms the text of this verse is hopelessly corrupt, probably due, at any rate to some extent, to the mutilated condition of the MS.; evidently more than one copy was made of the original psalm, with the result that the corruption was increased. In the light of the context, however, the original text can be tentatively restored—in this we are partly indebted to Gunkel; while the correctness of the emendation cannot of course be guaranteed, it may be claimed that it gives the general sense of what was originally written. We have taken this psalm, in preference to Ps. 14, for detailed study because, although the latter represents the earlier form (mainly on account of the use of *Yahweh* for *Elohim*), the passage which contains the main differences seems in Ps. 53 to have retained more of the original text than the corresponding verse in Ps. 14.

The psalm was written at a period of moral decline among the people in general, and not less so among those who should have been their religious leaders, namely the priests (for the justification of this statement see the exegetical notes). Of such deplorable conditions the prophets had occasion to complain at different times; for example, in Hos. 4⁶⁻⁹ it is said: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. . . . They feed on the sin of my people, and set their heart on their iniquity. And it shall be, like people, like priest; and I will punish them for their ways, and will recompense them for their doings." In later days another prophet says: "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the Law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of Yahweh of hosts. But ye are turned aside out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble in the Law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith Yahweh of hosts" (Mal. 2^{7, 8}); this belongs to about the middle of the fifth century B.C. Still later, about 300 B.C., or thereabouts, another prophet, who was also an apocalypticist, speaks of the final world-catastrophe, saying: "The earth is polluted under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant"; and he prefaces this with: "And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest . . ."

(Isa. 24^{2, 5}); thus all come under the same condemnation. Our psalmist stands, therefore, in a line with the prophets; and there is reason to believe that he wrote his psalm at about the same period as the prophet from whose writing our last quotation is taken. The atheistic attitude referred to in the opening words of the psalm (cp. Ps. 10⁴ which belongs approximately to the same period) points to a time when intercourse among the Gentiles had weakened the faith of many, *i.e.*, during the Greek period; the worldliness of the priesthood, the ruling caste, was characteristic of this period; it was due, at any rate in part, to their political dealings with foreign potentates. In somewhat later times (*i.e.*, during the Maccabæan period) there is ample evidence of this. But that the psalm itself was written in Maccabæan times is quite out of the question. At a time when a great part of the people were fighting and dying for the faith of their fathers, how could it possibly be said: "Every one of them is gone back, they are altogether become abominable; none doeth good, not even one"?

The metre is for the most part 3 : 2.

1. *For the Precentor : Al-mahalath. Maskil. David's.*

1. (2). The fool saith in his heart :
 "There is no God!"
 They are corrupt and abominable^{act} in none doeth good,
 2 (3). ° God ° looketh down from heaven upon the children of men,
 To see if there are any that deal wisely,
 3 (4). Every one of them is gone back, seeking ° God °;
 they are altogether become corrupt,
 None doeth good,
 Not even one.
 4 (5). Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? they devour my people;
 They eat the bread of God, but call not upon ° his name °.
 5 (6). ° Is it not a terrible thing! for God doth scatter his bones;
 The profane one is brought to shame,
 For God hath rejected him °.
 6 (7). O ° for the salvation of ° Israel from when ° God ° bringeth back the restoration of his people;
 Zion,
 Jacob shall rejoice,
 Israel shall be glad.

Text-critical Notes

1. Read, with Ps. 14¹, עֲוֹלָהּ for עוֹל, "unrighteousness". 2. Ps. 14² has יְהוָה. Ps. 14⁴ has יְהוָה, but in this case wrongly. Read שָׁמָּה for שָׁם, "there", which has been put into the next verse. 5. For this verse read, following Gunkel:

הִלֵּאל־הָיָה פָּחַד בְּיִלְלֵיהֶם פָּזַר עֲצָמוֹתָיו
 חֲנָף הוֹבִישׁ
 בְּיִלְלֵיהֶם מָאָס :

(G = חֲנָף for חֲנָף). In order that the corruption of the text of this verse in both psalms may be seen, we quote them as they now stand:

שָׁם פָּחַד־הָיָה פָּחַד בְּיִלְלֵיהֶם פָּזַר עֲצָמוֹת חֲנָף הִבְשֵׁתָה בְּיִלְלֵיהֶם מָאָס : Ps. 53⁶

"There they feared a terrible thing, there was no terrible thing, for God doth scatter

the bones of him that encampeth against thee; thou hast put to shame, for God hath rejected them ”.

שָׁם פָּחַדוּ פָּחַד בְּיְהוָה בְּדוֹר צָדִיק: עֲצַת-עֲנִי תִבְשֹׁשׁ כִּי יִהְיֶה מִחֲקָהוּ: Ps. 14⁶,⁸

“ There they feared a terrible thing, for God is in the generation of the righteous. The counsel of the poor ye put to shame; for Yahweh is his refuge.” 6. Read, with some MSS. and the Versions, also Ps. 14⁷, יְשׁוּעוֹת for יְשׁוּעָה, “salvations”, or “helps”; Ps. 14 has יְהוּדָה.

For the title, see p. 17.

1-3. Horror-struck at the wickedness which he sees all around him, the psalmist begins his denunciation in a manner as terse as it is drastic: *The fool saith in his heart, There is no God*. As the verbs in the plural show, the *fool* is meant collectively. It should also be pointed out that the verbs, though in the perfect, represent actions the influence of which extends into the present; so that while in Hebrew the perfect form is used, the sense is present; hence in English they should be rendered in the present tense. The expression *fool* (*nabal*) connotes not merely stupidity, but also disgraceful and immoral conduct, in him thus designated. Those condemned by the psalmist say: *There is no God*; their saying so is due to two causes: persistent evil-living results not only in forgetting God, but, in effect, in denying his existence. In addition to this, the contact with Gentiles involved many Jews in what was practically atheism; true, the Gentiles had their gods, but to the psalmist, as to the prophet (Isa. 41²⁴) they were “nothing”. The wickedness of those of whom the psalmist speaks is described in a threefold way: *they are corrupt, i.e.*, they are morally ruined (cp. *e.g.*, Prov. 6³²); *abominable in act, i.e.*, what they do is abhorrent; *none doeth good, i.e.*, there is nothing that mitigates in any way their evil doing. It need hardly be said that the psalmist is not speaking of mankind in general, but of his own people, see *v.* 4, “my people”. Naïve as the psalmist’s conception is in picturing the Almighty as *looking down from heaven upon the children of men*, this old-world realism enshrines a very deep spiritual truth; and if, in saying that *none doeth good, not even one*, he somewhat overstates the unhappy conditions of the time, such overstatement is very natural and pardonable in a devout and loyal servant of God who stands aghast at the sight of evil-living men about him. 4-5. So far the psalmist has been speaking of his people in general; now he particularizes. The change of subject is abrupt, but there is no mistaking whom he now has in mind; he uses a phrase which makes this quite clear: *they eat the bread of God*. Whether by the expression *the bread of God* is meant sacrifices in general (*e.g.*, Lev. 21⁶), or the show-bread, called “the bread of God” in Lev. 21²², cp. Lev. 3¹¹, 1 Sam. 21⁴, see also Matth. 12^{3, 4}, is immaterial (probably both are included), the point is that it is the priests whom he now denounces because they *call not upon his name*; they are *workers of iniquity* who

have no *knowledge*, *i.e.*, of God (cp. Hos. 1^{4,6}); instead of being spiritual guides, *they devour the people*, in reference to the sacrificial offerings brought by the people, which they consumed for their own benefit (cp. Ezek. 34). The verse which follows (5), as will be seen from the text-critical note, is very corrupt; one of the difficulties centres in the fact that both in this psalm and in Ps. 14, "they", "them", as well as "he", "him", occur, so that it is an open question whether one particular priest or the priests as a whole are referred to. In the preceding verse, it is true, the priests as a body are clearly meant; both psalms agree in this; but it is just for this reason that a copyist may have altered the pronoun. We have taken the reference in the verse before us to be to one in particular, *i.e.*, the High-priest, for he, as the head of the priesthood, would be most to blame. We know from somewhat later history how sometimes the High-priest was far from being what he ought to have been (1 Macc. 7^{21, 22}, 9⁵⁴⁻⁵⁶, 2 Macc. 4⁶⁻¹⁰, 13³⁻⁸). In the present case an awful fate overtakes him: *Is it not a terrible thing! for God doth scatter his bones*; that means that he was not accorded decent burial, a fearful degradation (cp. Jer. 8^{1, 2}, 2 Chron. 34⁵); so it is said: *The profane is brought to shame, for God hath rejected him*. From this terrible picture the psalmist turns to envisage the future (6), and prays for *the restoration of his people*; the phrase used is *šûb š'bûth*, a technical term for the bringing back of the time of primeval happiness (for the fuller explanation of this see Ps. 85); then *Jacob shall rejoice and Israel shall be glad*.

On this psalm a section on the religious teaching is not called for.

PSALM 54

A SHORT and simple, but heartfelt appeal to the Almighty for help against such as had "not set God before them", *i.e.*, freethinkers. The psalm is similar in content to a number of others (*e.g.*, 55, 64, etc.). It is the outpouring of an individual who speaks on his own behalf. Like all those psalms which deal with the enmity of the freethinking element in the community against the orthodox, the psalm belongs to the Greek period.

The metre is irregular, alternating between 3 : 2 and 3 : 3; in *v.* 3 it is 3 : 3 : 3.

1. *For the Precentor: With stringed instruments. Maskil. David's; 2. When the Ziphites came and said to Saul, "Is not David hiding himself with us?"*

- 1 (3). O God, by thy name save me, and by thy power vindicate me;
 2 (4). O God, hear my prayer, give ear to the words-of-my-mouth;
 3 (5). For the ° proud ° are risen against me,
 and violent men seek my life;
 they have not set God before them. Selah.

- 4 (6). Behold, God helpeth me, the Lord is ° one that upholdeth ° my life;
 5 (7). May ° he requite ° the evil unto mine enemies, in thy faithfulness destroy them.
 6 (8). With a free-will-offering will I sacrifice to thee, I will praise thy name, ° for it is good;
 7 (9). For it hath delivered me from all trouble, and mine eye gloateth over mine enemies.

Text-critical Notes

3. Read זָרִים for זָרִים, "strangers", as being a better parallel to "violent men", זָרִים, see Ps. 86¹⁴. 4. Not as R.V., "of them that uphold", see GK 119i, and exeg. note. 5. Read יִשְׁבֵּחַ. 6. Om. יְהוָה for the rhythm's sake.

The title, which occurs also in G, may be due to some ingenious copyist who discerned a parallel between the evil machinations of the psalmist's enemies and the episode recounted in 1 Sam. 23¹⁹⁻²³. 1-3. In accordance with most psalms of this kind prayer is offered before the mention of what is prayed for: *O God, by thy name save me*, i.e., by means of the name, the utterance of which was all-powerful, hence the words which follow: *and by thy power vindicate me* (cp. Pss. 5^{11,12}, 2¹²). *Name* and *power* are thus parallel, just as *hear my prayer*, and *give ear to the words-of-my-mouth* (one beat in Hebrew), form another parallelism. Then follows the reason for which the prayer was offered (3). The psalmist is assailed by those who are described as *proud*, or "arrogant", and *violent*; the former epithet connotes the idea of presumptuousness, the latter that of causing terror, because such men are ruthless in their actions. The cause of their enmity is a religious one, for *they have not set God before them*, which is just what the psalmist does first and foremost. He, therefore, affirms with quiet confidence that (4) *God helpeth me*, and *upholdeth my life*. The Hebrew form of the expression *one that upholdeth* is difficult to render adequately in translation; to translate it literally, as the R.V. does, "of (or marg. "with") them that uphold", as though *the Lord* were one among others, conveys quite an erroneous idea. The concept of upholding, or preserving, life can be held in regard both to men and to God, without for a moment comparing human with divine action; in the same way, men can help, and *God helpeth*; but there is no kind of comparison between the help of each. The parallelism in Hebrew poetry is seen here to be of great value for purposes of interpretation. When the psalmist then goes on to express the wish (5) that *God may requite the evil unto mine enemies . . .*, we are confronted with a distasteful *trait*, but at least he does not retaliate personally, vengeance is left in the hands of God (cp. Ps. 143¹² and elsewhere). A promise of thanksgiving follows (6): *With a freewill-offering will I sacrifice to thee: and I will praise thy name, for it is good*, reverting to the opening verse. The freewill-offering (*nēdābāh*) was a sacrifice which was offered not of obligation, but with the sole purpose of honouring God (cp. Exod. 35²⁹).

The power of the name is again emphasized in the concluding verse (7): *for it hath delivered me from all trouble*; the certitude that its utterance brings about what is desired is such that the psalmist can speak of his trouble as already past. The final words illustrate once more a spirit of vengeful bitterness; the Hebrew expression means more than merely looking upon the enemy, it connotes the idea of rejoicing over him (cp. Pss. 112^a, 118⁷).

The religious teaching of this type of psalm is dealt with in that of others of a similar nature, e.g., 28 and others, especially Ps. 35 (final section).

PSALM 55

THIS psalm presents unusual difficulties, both of text and of interpretation. It is classed by Gunkel as a "Lament of the Individual", and Hans Schmidt still further specifies it as one of the poems used in legal process by an accused person, who is protesting his innocence and pleading for acquittal in the supreme court—the house of God. But, even if this be admitted, there remain problems whose solution is far from being certain, mainly due to the repeated change in the personal pronouns. Sometimes the opponent is a single individual, in vv. 12–14 directly addressed, in v. 21 mentioned in the third person. In vv. 10–12, again, there seems to be a general complaint, in the prophetic spirit, of iniquity rife in the city as a whole. We cannot invoke the doctrine of corporate personality here, because the adversary (or adversaries) is not a formal group, but a number of individuals who are at one in their attack on the speaker, though they seem to be otherwise independent of each other. In the circumstances, it is not surprising that several commentators hold the psalm to be composite. Thus Briggs makes two psalms, 1–8^a and 8^b–23, with a later insertion in 16–19. Gunkel finds a separate piece in 19^c–22, 24, while Buitenen assigns vv. 1–11, 16–19, 22 to one poem, and regards 12–14, 20–21 as a fragment, in which there is a gap after v. 14. Hans Schmidt thinks that the original poem has been worked over in order to adapt it to a national situation. We may, however, regard the whole as a unity, especially if v. 18 is correctly read and interpreted below, and ascribe the swift changes of person to the liveliness of the Hebrew mind. Even so, unless we are to accept drastic alterations of text, there is a gap between vv. 14 and 15, the latter part of one line and the beginning of another, with, perhaps, several lines between, having been lost.

Thus regarded, the psalm appears as the plaint of one who is attacked by enemies, public or private. His case makes him long for solitude,

for it is his old friends and acquaintances who have made him the object of their assault. One, in particular is singled out, perhaps, on Hans Schmidt's theory, the chief accuser. In the spirit normal among ancient Israelites (though not confined to them), the psalmist prays for vengeance on his enemies.

There is little to indicate date; style and language suggest the post-exilic rather than the pre-exilic period. The author is familiar with the old Israelite stories, *e.g.*, of the Tower of Babel and of the death of Dathan and Abiram. The text is often obscure and uncertain, but help is sometimes given by the Septuagint and by the Peshitta.

The metre is 3 : 2, with 2 : 2 in *vv.* 9, 10^{ab}, and, probably, in the last line of all. Anacrusis occurs in *v.* 6.

For the Precentor : On stringed instruments. Maskil. Of David.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 (2). Give ear, O Yahweh, to my prayer, | and hide thee not from my petition. |
| 2 (3). Attend to me and answer me; | restless am I with anxious thought. |
| 3 (4). By the voice of the foe, ^o | |
| ^o And I am distraught ^o | by the cry of ^o the wicked. |
| For ^o they turn ^o evil upon me, | and in wrath they bitterly assail me; |
| 4 (5). My heart doth writhe within me, | and terrors ^o are upon me. |
| 5 (6). Fear and trembling come over me, | and shuddering hath covered me. |
| 6 (7). And I said : | |
| Oh that I had pinions as a dove, | that I might fly away and make my |
| | home ! |
| 7 (8). Behold, afar would I rove, | I would lodge in a wilderness ! Selah. |
| 8 (9). I would haste to my refuge | ^o from the blast of the storm ^o ! |
| 9 (10). Confound, O Lord, | divide their speech ! |
| For I have seen violence, | and strife in the city. |
| 10 (11). By day and by night | they encompass it upon its walls. |
| Evil and pain are within her, | 11 (12). ruin ^o in her midst ^o , |
| Nor are her spaces free | from violence and deceit. |
| 12 (13). For it is no foe that insulteth me, | or I could bear ^o my shame. |
| Not my enemy that hath done | |
| great things against me, | or I would hide from him. |
| 13 (14). But it is thou, a man mine equal, | mine intimate and my friend, |
| 14 (15). With whom I was wont to have | |
| sweet converse | in the house of God. |
| We would walk in the sacred | |
| throng, | |
| 15 (16). May ^o deceive, | death ^o swallow them up ^o , |
| May they go down alive to Sheol, | for evils ^o are in their heart. |
| 16 (17). As for me—unto God will I call, | and may Yahweh save me. |
| 17 (18). Evening and morning and noon | would I meditate and moan. |
| ^o That he may hear ^o my voice, | |
| 18 (19). ^o and redeem ^o | my soul in peace. |
| (Redeem ^o from them that are near | |
| me, for as adversaries ^o | have they become to me. |
| 19 (20). May God hear ^o and afflict them ^o , | he that dwelleth ^o from of old ^o . |
| Which keep no oath, | nor fear they God. |
| 20 (21). He hath put forth his hand ^o against | |
| his confederates ^o , | he hath defiled his covenant. |
| 21 (22). Smoother ^o than butter ^o ^o is his | |
| face ^o , | but war is ^o in his heart ^o . |
| Softer his words than oil, | yet are they drawn swords. |
| 22 (23). Cast thy burden on Yahweh, | and he shall sustain thee. |
| He will not suffer for ever | the righteous to be moved. |
| 23 (24). But thou, O God, wilt bring them | |
| down | ^o to the pit of doom ^o ; |
| Men of blood and deceit | shall not live out half their days. |
| But I will trust | in thee, ^o O Yahweh ^o . |

Text-critical Notes

2. Read, with Duhm, וְאֶחָדָה for "and I moan". 3. Read, with Olshausen, מַּזְעָקָה for "pressure of". Read, with G, וַיִּשְׁאוּ for "they remove". 4. Om., with Gunkel, "of death" and "have fallen". 8. Read, with S, מִרִּיחַ סַעְרָה for "from rushing wind, from tempest". 11. Read, with Duhm, בְּרוּכָה for "within her". 12. Add בְּלִמְתִּי (the verb needs an object; cp. Ez. 16⁶², 36⁶). 15. Read, with Q^{re}, וְשִׁמָּה מִרָה for K^{ethibh} וְשִׁמָּה (= desolations). Read, with Brüll, יִבְעֲלֵמוּ for "upon them". Om., with S, "in their terror". 17. Read, with G, וְשָׁמַע for "and he heard". 18. Read, with G, וַיִּפְדֵּה for "he redeemed". Read (cp. S) מִן מִלְחָמָה לִּי פִי בְּרַבִּים for "from my war" (or "from nearness to me") "for with many". 19. Read, with G, וַיַּעֲנוּ for "and answer them". Read, with G, וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּמִזְרָח for "and he that dwelleth in the east" (or "of old"). 20. Read, with G, יָדָיו for "his hands". Read, with Gunkel, בְּשָׁלְוָתִי for "in his peace" (plur.). 21. Read, with Olshausen, מִחֲמָה for "butter-words" (?). Read, with G, פִּיָּו for "his mouth". Read, with Buhl, בְּלִבּוֹ for "his heart". 23. Read, with Buhl, לְבֵאֵר for "to the spring of". Add, with G, יִהְיֶה.

The psalmist begins, in language appropriate to a hymn of distress, with an appeal to Yahweh to *give ear* and *attend* to him. He has been *restless*, turning this way and that with his *anxious thought*. The trouble comes from the outside, and is due to the *voice of the foe* and the *cry of the wicked*. They control, as it were, the course that *evil* takes, and can "bend" and *turn* its path so that it will meet him. Hence the *writhing* of his heart—a strong metaphor for palpitation—the *fear*, *trembling*, and *shuddering* which have come over him. In words familiarized and enriched by their musical associations, he expresses his longing to get away from all his trouble; even a *wilderness* would be preferable to the *breath of the storm* that rages about him (vv. 6-8).

It is not surprising that in such case the poet should pray for vengeance. His mind goes back to the old story of how Yahweh had *confounded* and *divided* the speech of men who, in their arrogance, had sought to reach the heavens. Wherever he looks, he finds iniquity, *violence and strife*, which go round the city walls like watchmen; his trouble is only one example of a general situation (9-11).

Suddenly the psalmist's thought fastens on one aspect of his case. As we gather from 18 (if the reading adopted from the Syriac version be approximately correct), his adversaries are his former intimates. But it seems that there had been one whose hostility and faithlessness had been especially prominent, and it is to him that the psalmist turns. His trouble would have been bearable if it had been caused by a *foe*, but a man cannot *hide* from a *familiar* and a *friend*, especially when their intimacy has been cemented by the *sweet converse* they have had together in the *house of God*. We may suspect that both the psalmist and his adversary were priests attached to the sanctuary, and the language of 14 recalls that of Ps. 42⁴.

Here there is a break, too sudden to be ascribed to a simple change of thought, for it comes in the middle of a line. We are forced to the

conclusion that there has been some accidental mutilation of the text, perhaps at the foot of a column of writing. When the poem is resumed, we are near the end of a curse on the enemy. The common term, *swallow them up*, takes the poet's mind back to the story of Dathan and Abiram, and he prays that his enemies too *may go down alive to Sheol* (15, cp. Num. 16³¹⁻³³).

Back comes the poet once more to his own need. At the special hours of prayer—*evening, morning and noon*—he would plead with Yahweh. The times mentioned have been held to suggest a post-exilic date, but, while we know that they were the proper hours of worship in later Israel, we do not know that the custom was instituted after the Return; it may have been ancient. As the sufferer pleads, there rises again the bitter thought that his *adversaries* are those who have been *near* him (18, 19). Their perfidy (*oath* is an unusual sense for the word employed here, but is certified by a cognate Arabic root), and their disregard of the obligations imposed by association and *covenant*, together with the foul hypocrisy which makes their faces *smoother than butter* and their *words* more soothing than *oil* (again the psalmist singles out an individual), while *war* and *drawn swords* (a unique word) are in their *heart*—these things once more provoke a prayer for the punishment of the enemy (20, 21).

Verse 22 reads as though it were the divine answer to the psalmist's prayer. Again we have words which are among the most familiar of those given to us by the Old Testament. The man who *casts his burden upon Yahweh* will receive the divine nourishment and sustenance. That is all the assurance he needs, and the poem concludes in 23 with the renewed contrast between the premature fate of the wicked and the psalmist's happy *trust* in *Yahweh*.

Religious Teaching

As so often, the value of the psalm lies not so much in its doctrine as in the spirit it expresses. Here is a man living in a world of violence and treachery which threaten to overwhelm him, longing to escape from it all, and yet confident in the God to whom he has committed himself. Though he would shelter from the storm, and cannot, yet the temple of his life is founded on a rock, the rock of his faith.

PSALM 56

LIKE so many other pieces in the Psalter, this is a cry of suffering and strikes the familiar notes. The poet is in distress, surrounded by malicious and crafty enemies who plot his ruin and seek his life. There is

no word of confession or of consciousness of sin, nor, on the other hand, is there any assertion of innocence. While, then, Gunkel is justified in placing the psalm among the "Laments of the individual", there is less ground for Hans Schmidt's ascription of the piece to the "prayers of the accused". It is, however, apparent that at least one attempt has been made to adapt the psalm to the needs of the community; the latter part of *v.* 7, with its demand for the punishment of the "nations", has no place in a merely personal appeal.

The structure of the psalm is interesting and suggestive. It is generally recognized that it falls into two almost equal parts, the division coming after *v.* 7. In *vv.* 4 and 10-11 we have nearly identical language (*v.* 10 contains an obvious doublet), and, though some moderns (notably Gunkel and Hans Schmidt) regard this as due to textual corruption, it is difficult to avoid the impression that Briggs is right, and that we have a genuine refrain of some kind. It is possible that such a "refrain" might have been placed in the middle of the section to which it belongs—the earlier champions of the "strophe" often found such medial refrains. But, on the whole, it seems more probable that it occurred originally at the end of each section and not in the middle. This would mean that it has dropped out after *v.* 7, where its place is taken by the intrusive and obscure reference to the "nations", and after *v.* 13. This arrangement would yield four three-line stanzas, each followed by the refrain. *V.* 9 seems to have been mutilated; possibly the doublet of *v.* 10 ousted the proper conclusion of the verse. There is also, apparently, a word missing at the end of *v.* 13; it is easy to understand that it might have suffered the fate of the last refrain.

There is nothing in the psalm, either in style or in reference, which gives the least clue to its date. The text seems to have suffered seriously in course of transmission, though both the Septuagint and the Peshitta sometimes offer a useful alternative text.

The metre is 3 : 3 throughout, the refrain being 3 : 3 : 3. Anacrusis occurs in *v.* I.

1. *For the Precentor : On "The dove of the distant oaks". Of David. Miktam.*
When the Philistines seized him in Gath.
- 1 (2). ° O God ! °
 Have mercy on me, for man
 trampleth me down, every day doth the warrior oppress me.
- 2 (3). Watchers do ever oppress me, for many war against me.
 ° Uplift me ° 3 (4). in the day that
 I fear ; I will trust in thee.
- 4 (5). In God ° I will carry my cause to
 its end °, in God do I trust, fearless ;
 what shall flesh do unto me ?
- 5 (6). Ever they speak, ° they take
 counsel °, against me are all their thoughts.
 For evil 6 (7). they lurk, ° they
 spy on me they watch my steps.

- As they have longed for my life, 7 (8). ° heed ° their iniquity ° . °
 ° In God I will carry my cause to its
 end ; in God do I trust, fearless ;
 what shall flesh do unto me ? °
- 8 (9). O count thou ° my restless toss-
 ings ° set my tears ° before thee ° . ° °
 9 (10). Then shall my foes turn back, in the day when I cry ° unto thee ° .
 This I know, that God is mine,
- 10 (11). In God ° I will carry my cause to
 its end ° ; ° in God do I trust, fearless,
 what shall ° flesh ° do unto me ?
 12 (13). Vows to thee are upon me, my God, thank-offering will I pay unto thee.
 13 (14). For thou deliveredst my soul from
 death, ° thou keptest my feet from stumbling.
 That I might walk in the presence
 of God, in the light of life
 ° In God will I carry my cause to its
 end ; in God do I trust, fearless ;
 what shall flesh do unto me ? °

Text-critical Notes

1. Transpose אלהים to beginning of verse. 2. Read, with Gunkel, רוממני for "on high". 4. Read, with Schlögl, דבריו for "I will praise his word". 5. Read, with Gunkel (cp. S), יתעברו יתעברו for "they pain my words" (or "my words give pain"). 6. Read, with Gunkel, יתעברו for "they conceal". 7. Read, with Ewald, פלס for "deliver". Om. "In anger bring down the nations, O God" (gloss). Insert, with Briggs, refrain as v. 4. 8. Read, with Duhm, נדד for "my wandering" (?). Read, with G, לנדה for "in thy bottle". Om., with Briggs, "are they not in thy reckoning?" 9. Insert, with G, קד. 10. Cp. on v. 4. Om., with Gunkel, "In God will I praise with a word". 11. Read (cp. v. 4) בשר for "man". 13. Read, with Halévy, פלאה for "is not?" Insert, with Briggs, refrain as in v. 4.

For the title, see p. 17.

The first three stanzas of this psalm are devoted to a description of the psalmist's plight and a plea for deliverance. In the first (1-4) he cries out for *mercy*, the free, unmerited, favour of a God on whom he has no claims, and pleads that he may be *uplifted* from the pit of troubles into which he has fallen. His enemies are cruel, powerful, and crafty *warriors* who *trample* him *down*, *watchers* who let slip no opportunity of *oppressing* him. Yet he is determined to see the matter through to *its end*, and this conviction that God will at last see him is the refrain which runs all through the poem.

The second stanza (5-7) stresses the malicious cunning of the adversaries. The poet is under constant observation, for at every corner in the city and behind every bush in the country there *lurks* a *spy*, ready to take advantage of anything he may say or do. The world for him is full of jealous eyes, all *watching* him, that his foes may win their hope and rob him of *life*.

In the third stanza (8-11) we have the victim turning to God for

vengeance and deliverance. He begs that God will *count* (a precative perfect, as Bittenwieser has seen) the number of times he has turned and tossed on his bed, kept wakeful by anxiety and fear. He would have his *tears set before* God (the "bottle" of the traditional Hebrew text is a large wineskin, and in no way resembles the little glass "tear-bottles" identified by the archæologist; hence the adoption of the reading attested by G). Then he will win his case, and the defeated enemy will *turn back* in flight.

Such deliverance calls for thanksgiving (12-13). The psalmist is under an obligation, he *bears* his *vows* as a burden to be discharged. So sure is he of the rightness of his cause, and of the divine justice and mercy, that he can speak of his deliverance as an accomplished fact. The confidence of the refrain is justified, and its note of unshaken trust gives a fitting conclusion to the poem.

Religious Teaching

The psalm is but another testimony to the firm belief of the pious Israelite in the justice, mercy, and love of God—a thought so characteristic as to need no further elaboration.

PSALM 57

THIS psalm falls naturally into two parts, *vv.* 1-5 and 6-11, each consisting of seven lines followed by a refrain. *Vv.* 7-11, however, reappear (with some slight textual differences) in Ps. 108: 1-5. The two sections are alike in tone; each prays for deliverance from enemies. But, while the first half ends (apart from the refrain) with a description of these enemies, the second is mainly occupied with an exultant outburst of song, due to the sense of God's greatness. *V.* 6, it is true, describes the psalmist's peril, but the poet passes at once to the happier note in *v.* 7.

It is widely recognized that in Ps. 57 we have a combination of two psalms, or rather of sections of two psalms. The division, however, is usually made after *v.* 6, not after *v.* 5, an arrangement which seems at first sight to be supported by the text of Ps. 108 but which fails to take into account the structure of Ps. 57. The presence and position of the refrain strongly suggest that the true line of partition comes after *v.* 5.

Clearly, neither portion is complete. *Vv.* 1-5 obviously form the first "stanza" of a poem which celebrated redemption from the perils actually described, and we may safely assume that the whole originally

ended on the note of confidence with which it began. The second part is equally clearly the conclusion of a poem with a similar *motif*; while the refrain in *v.* 5 makes it impossible to attach *v.* 6 closely to the first part, the *Selah* at the end of *v.* 6 makes it appear that this was the closing verse of a section, or stanza, whose earlier portion has not been preserved.

We conclude, then, that the person responsible for the present form of Ps. 57 took these two sections from other psalms. The first was a complete stanza; in attaching the second he included a pair of lines which would give the same number of lines as those in the first extract, and would take up the theme where the first left off. To round off the whole, he added the last line of his first selection at the end of the second; it may have been already a refrain in the psalm from which *vv.* 1-5 were drawn.

In spite of textual differences (some of which disappear in the Septuagint), the "compiler" of Ps. 108 probably borrowed directly from this psalm. This seems to be the most probable explanation of the fact that *v.* 11, which, as we have seen, can hardly have belonged to the poem from which these verses were taken, is also found in Ps. 108⁵.

Accurate dating is out of the question; the first part contains in *v.* 3 a reminiscence of Ps. 43³ and is, then, later than Pss. 42-43.

The text is, on the whole, well preserved. The Septuagint sometimes offers a superior reading, but conjectural emendation is hardly necessary.

Metre: *Vv.* 1-5, 11, 3 : 3, with 2 : 2 : 2 in 4^b-5^a; *vv.* 6-10, 3 : 2, with 2 : 2 in 7^c-8^a.

For the Precentor : "Destroy not". *David's*. *Miktam*. *When he fled before Saul into the cave.*

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 (2). Grant me favour, O God, grant me
favour!
And in the shadow of thy wings
° am I secure ° | for in thee hath my soul trusted.
° till the destruction be passed °.
to God ° who bestoweth good ° on me.
° may he put to shame ° them that
crush me. <i>Selah</i> . |
| 2 (3). I cry to God Most High,
3 (4). May he send from heaven and save
me,
May God send | his love and his truth,
4 (5), ° and deliver ° my soul.
blazing (with hate) are the sons of men.
upon all the earth be thy glory. |
| In the midst of lions I lay me down ;
5 (6). Be high over the heavens, O God ; | ° they have bent down ° my soul.
they have fallen therein. <i>Selah</i> . |
| 6 (7). A net have they spread for my feet,
They have dug before me a pit ;
7 (8). Firmly fixed is my heart, O my
God ;
I would sing and give praise !
Awake, lute and lyre, | firmly fixed is my heart.
8 (9). awake, ° O my lyre °.
I would waken the dawn ! |
| 9 (10). I will praise thee among the
peoples, O Lord,
10 (11). For thy love is great unto the
heavens, | hymn thee among the nations.
and unto the skies thy truth.
upon all the earth be thy glory. |
| 11 (12). Be high over the heavens, O God ; | |

Text-critical Notes

1. Read, with G, אֶבְטֹחַ for "I will trust". Read עָדִי עֲבֹר for יַעֲבֹר עָדִי.
 2. Read, with G, גָּמַל for "who completeth". 3. Read (cp. G) יִתֵּן לְחִרְפָּה for
 "he hath shamed". 4. Insert (cp. G) וַיִּשָּׁע. 6. Read, with G, קָפַפִּי for "he
 bent down". 8. Read, with G, כְּבוֹדִי for "my glory".

While it is true that portions of two psalms have here been combined, it is clear that the composite result was intended to be a unified whole. The compiler deliberately constructed this "prayer of the individual" to express his own needs and the needs of others in like case with himself. He opens, then, in *v.* 1, with a plea for *favour*, the free, uncovenanted grace on which he has no claim, and with an expression of *trust* and *security*. Black though the outlook may be, he has no real cause for anxiety, for he can rely on his God. Then, in *v.* 2, he proceeds to put his request, basing his demand, as so often, on the fact that God has *bestowed good* on him in the past, and demanding that his enemies be *put to shame*. He recalls Ps. 43³, and describes his foes as *lions*, or as men in a *blaze* of hate. This leads him to the refrain; the vindication of his cause will serve as an assertion of God's universal supremacy.

The second part is almost identical, as we have seen, with Ps. 108¹⁻⁶. But *v.* 6 appears only here; the compiler of the later psalm did not need it for his purpose, though it forms a good transition from complaint to confidence. It is true that the enemy has *put a net for the feet* of the psalmist—the word used for "feet" commonly means "steps" in Hebrew, but means "feet" in Phœnician—and has *dug a pit before* him, but it is the offender who suffers, not the intended victim. This may be an experience already past, or it may be an expression of complete certainty in the knowledge of divine justice. Whichever it be, it gives a *heart firmly fixed*, a serene reliance on God. But the psalmist soon goes further still; his confidence is not merely passive, but results in an outburst of song and *praise* (*v.* 7). He must give utterance to his feeling, and turns to the instruments of music so long mute and sleeping, and bids them *awake*. So great is his joy that it must be told abroad to the *nations* (*v.* 9). It is only right that this should be so, for the *love* of God is as great as the *heavens* which arch over all men (*v.* 10), and his *glory* should be spread *high over all the earth*.

Religious Teaching

We have, once more, the familiar truths that God hears prayer, that he punishes the wicked, and that he justifies the righteous.

PSALM 58

THIS psalm, like Ps. 82, brings before us certain forms of iniquity and injustice, which are ascribed either to subordinate deities or to human

rulers who claim divine rank. A fuller discussion of the question will be found under Ps. 82. Ps. 58 is simple in form, as it falls into two unequal parts, of which the former, *vv.* 1-5, describes the iniquity rampant in the world, and the latter, *vv.* 6-11, calls for vengeance. There is no evidence whatever as to the date of the psalm; if the rulers were native Israelites, it might be pre-exilic. But it is not likely that Israelites would have claimed divine honours at any period, and it is, therefore, more probable that the sinners are foreigners and the date post-exilic. There are one or two linguistic peculiarities, including a few rare words and a preference for the long, poetic forms of certain prepositions.

Metre: 4 : 3, with 3 : 4 in *vv.* 4 and 8.

For the Precantor : " Destroy not ". David's. Miktam.

- 1 (2). ° O ye gods ! ° will ye verily speak righteously,
judge men uprightly ?
2 (3). Surely, with a heart of ° iniquity ° do ye work in the earth ;
violence ° do your hands ° weigh out ° !
3 (4). Estranged are the wicked,
from birth ° they speak ° falsehood.
4 (5). They have poison like a ° ° serpent,
as a deaf cobra that stoppeth its ears ;
5 (6). That heedeth not the voice of the charmers,
of the skilled weaver of spells.
6 (7). O God, crush their teeth in their mouth,
the fangs of the young lion uproot. ° °
7 (8). May they vanish as waters that pass away,
° as grass by the path ° let them wither.
8 (9). As the snail that passeth in slime,
° as a woman's abortion, ° let them see not the sun.
9 (10). Before they know it, ° may he cut them down ° as a bramble.
° as with wind ° in ° fury ° may he sweep them away °.
10 (11). Let the righteous be glad when he seeth vengeance ;
let him wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.
11 (12). And let mankind say, " Surely the righteous hath fruit,
yea, there is a God that judgeth in the earth ".

Text-critical Notes

1. Read, with Ewald, אֱלִים for "dumbness". 2. Read, with S, עֲוֹל for "iniquities" (or "burnt-offerings" ?). Read, with G, חֲמָס for "violence of". Read (cp. G) תַּפְלִסְטִין for "speakers of". 4. Om., with G, "poison of". 6. Om. "Yahweh" (gloss). 7. Read (?) with Gressmann (cited by Gunkel), כְּמוֹ חֲצִיר בְּדֶרֶךְ for "he treadeth on his arrow as . . .". 8. Read, with Buhl, אֲשֶׁרֶת for "a woman's abortion". 9. Read, with Gunkel, יְבִרְתָּם כְּמוֹ for "your cooking-pots". Read, with Gunkel, רִיחַ for "living". Read כְּמוֹ for "like". Read, with Gunkel, יִשְׁעָרָם for "may he sweep him away".

As has been already pointed out, the first part of this psalm (*vv.* 1-5) gives an account of the iniquities and corrupt government of certain powers, human or divine. As in Ps. 82, they are addressed as *gods*, and it is possible that we should take the word *men* at the end of *v.* 1 as a vocative, and not as the object to the verb. That would offer a pointed contrast, such as we actually find in Ps. 82 : "Ye call yourselves

gods, but ye are only men, after all!" We note the familiar features in the complaint, *iniquity* and *violence*.

In v. 3, the psalmist ceases to address the offenders directly, and turns to God in prayer. He emphasizes the innate corruption of the wicked rulers, who *err* and *speak falsehood* as life-long habits. They are like snakes who will not be *charmed*, even by *the skilled weaver of spells*. As the language implies, the power of taming snakes was held to be a species of magic, and even to-day there seems to be something "uncanny" about the process. In this instance, however, the *serpents* are deliberately unresponsive; they themselves *stop* their *ears*.

The crimes and wicked nature of the offenders have now been described and in v. 6 the imprecation begins with a new metaphor, that of the *young lion*, which can be rendered harmless only by having its *teeth crushed* and its *fangs* (a rare and late word) uprooted. Other comparisons follow—the flowing streams, the grass, the snail, the issue of miscarriage, the bramble (or, more exactly, buckthorn). Most of these are familiar, but the snail is particularly interesting. The slimy trail the creature leaves is supposed to be a part of its body, which thus gradually wears away. In the latter part of v. 8 we seem to have a reminiscence of Job 3¹⁶, and the verb in the last clause is a good example of the "precativ perfect", so emphasized by Battenwieser. We must remember that these parallels are more than mere poetic similes. The person weaving the spell was making a deliberate attempt to destroy his enemy thereby. He brought the object of his wrath into some kind of connexion with these perishing or dead objects, and it might be supposed that the destruction which had befallen them, or which would befall them, would involve also the person whom the spell had linked to them. When the poet said "*may they vanish as waters*", he actually included them among the waters, and the fate of the *passing* streams would be theirs. When he classified them with the *snail*, the effect would be that every movement of theirs would scrape from them a portion of their substance, and so would, in the end, wear them completely away. The general principle lying behind words like these is much the same as that which appears in the familiar magical act of making a wax image of the person to be injured, and holding it before the fire. Here, it is true, we have no more than words, but words, to the ancient mind, are potent instruments for good or evil.

The psalm closes in vv. 10, 11 with the joy and relief of the righteous. It is not merely vindictive triumph that actuates them, but rather the feeling that, in spite of superficial appearances, the universe lies under the government of a truly righteous God.

Religious Teaching

Here, as so often, we have a demand for the vindication of God's character. He *is* righteous—so the psalmist believes—and in the end the truth will be so proved that men shall have no more doubts in the matter.

PSALM 59

Ps. 59 is the complaint of an individual, oppressed by his enemies, and rings the changes on the familiar *motifs*, prayer for deliverance, confidence in God, and demand for vengeance. It has certain affinities with Ps. 55, but, in the main, shows a fair amount of independence, and exhibits some unique expressions.

The structure of the psalm is curious. It contains twenty lines, with a fragment of a twenty-first. *Selah* occurs at the end of the sixth and fifteenth lines (*vv.* 5 and 13). Lines seven and sixteen (*vv.* 6 and 14) are identical; we may call them Refrain I. Line 10 and the first two words of line 11 (*vv.* 9, 10) are repeated at the end of the psalm (*v.* 17); this we may call Refrain II. The actual structure of the poem as it now stands, then, is:—

Six lines
Selah
 Refrain I
 Two lines
 Refrain II
 Four lines
Selah
 Refrain I
 Three lines
 Refrain II.

These facts suggest three different and mutually incompatible systems of strophic arrangement, none of which yields that metrical symmetry which is indispensable for true strophic organization. In the circumstances it is not surprising that several scholars have found the temptation to more or less drastic surgery irresistible. Sometimes lines are transposed; sometimes lines are eliminated (especially the refrains); sometimes even stranger reconstruction is attempted. Inasmuch as none of them appeals to us as satisfactory, and we can feel no confidence in any restoration of our own, we have allowed the psalm to stand as it

is in the traditional text, making only such verbal alterations as are necessitated by the sense of the individual verses, or suggested by the readings underlying the ancient Versions. At the same time, we fully realize that, in all probability, very considerable alterations have been made in the psalm since it was first written.

There is little clue to the date. There are phrases which suggest that the persecution is national rather than individual; if these be followed, the psalm will come from a time when Israel was suffering from foreign oppression. On the other hand, there are expressions which imply that the sufferer is an individual, and, if these are not to be explained by the doctrine of corporate personality, they will leave a very wide range within which to place the composition of the psalm. Unhappily there are few known periods in human history in which man has not had ground for complaint against his fellows.

Metre: 3 : 3, with 2 : 2 : 2 in *vv.* 6, 12^{a-c}, 13^{b-d} and 14. *Vv.* 1^b and 7 contain each a word which must count as two verse-units.

For the Precentor : " Destroy not ". David's. Miktam.

- | | | |
|----------|---|--|
| 1 (2). | Deliver me from my foes, O my God; | from them that exalt themselves against me rescue me. |
| 2 (3). | Deliver me from workers of iniquity; | and from men of blood save me. |
| 3 (4). | For behold! they lie in ambush for my life,
No transgression or sin is mine; | strong ones ° act presumptuously ° against me. |
| | Rouse thee to meet me, and look, | 4 (5). for no ° wrong of mine ° do they array them. |
| | Awake, to punish all nations, | 5 (6). seeing that thou art ° ° the God of Israel. |
| 6 (7). | They come back at even,
they growl as dogs, | to vile traitors show no favour. Selah. |
| | and go about the city. | |
| 7 (8). | Behold! they slaver with their mouth; | ° a sword ° is in their lips. ° ° |
| 8 (9). | But thou ° ° dost mock at them, | thou holdest all nations in derision. |
| 9 (10). | ° O my strength °, to thee will I sing praise; | for ° thou °, O God, art my fortress. |
| 10 (11). | ° My loving God ° shall meet me; | God shall let me look on mine adversaries. |
| 11 (12). | Slay them not, lest my people forget; | make them totter by thy might and bring them down. |
| 12 (13). | ° Deliver them up °, O Lord,
for the sin of their mouth, | the word of their lips, |
| | And for the curse and the spell they repeat, | ° may they be caught ° in their arrogance; |
| | And let them know that God ruleth in Jacob, | 13 (14). ° destroy them in thy wrath ° that they be no more. |
| 14 (15). | ° They come back ° at even,
they growl as dogs, | to the ends of the earth. Selah. |
| | and go about the city. | |
| 15 (16). | They wander for food; | if they be not sated, ° they murmur °. |
| 16 (17). | But I will sing of thy might,
For thou hast been my fortress, | exult loudly at morn in thy love.
and a refuge in the day of my affliction. |
| 17 (18). | O my strength I to thee will I bring praise, | for ° thou °, O God, art my fortress. |
| | My loving God . . . | |

Text-critical Notes

3. Read, with S (probably also G), יִזְרֶה for "stir up strife". Om., with Baethgen, "Yahweh". 4. Read, with Wellhausen, יָרָא for "wrong". 5. Om. "Yahweh God (of) Hosts". 7. Read, with G, יָרֵב for "swords". Om., with Duhm, "for who heareth?" 8. Om. "Yahweh". 9. Read, with G and v. 18, יָצַח for "his strength". Insert, with G, אֶת־יָדֶיךָ. 10. Read, with Q, יָצַח for K יָצַח. 12. Read, with Duhm, מִן־יָדֵינוּ for "our shield". Om., with S, "and". 13. Read (cp. S and Buhl) מִן־יָדֵינוּ לְפָנֶיךָ for "destroy in wrath, destroy". 14. Om., with G and v. 6, "and". 15. Read, with G, וְיָלִינֵי for "and they lodged". 17. Insert, with G, אֶת־יָדֶיךָ.

The psalmist begins with a prayer (vv. 1-3^b), which summarizes the whole poem. He is beset by *foes, workers of iniquity and men of blood*, from whom he seeks to be delivered. The word *rescue* in v. 1 is significant; the idea seems to have been a favourite with this psalmist for he uses the cognate noun three times. The root-meaning is that of "height"—his enemies *exalt themselves*, but God has a yet more lofty refuge for his servants, far out of their reach. The attack made by the *nations* is entirely unprovoked by any *transgression* or *wrong* done by the psalmist or his people, and therefore he can appeal to the *God of Israel* to *rouse* himself and *punish* the *traitors* (vv. 3-5). In the first refrain (v. 6), the enemy are likened to the dogs the scavengers of an eastern city, sleepy and harmless by day, but active and dangerous *at even*, when, as the psalmist paints them, they wander round the city with *slavering* jaws and *sword-like* fangs (v. 7).

The thought of divine protection reappears. After a glance at the *mockery* and *derision* God pours on the nations, the psalmist introduces the second refrain, emphasizing the *strength*, protection, and *love* of *God*, and the vengeance he secures (vv. 8-10). V. 11 offers a strange and subtle prayer; the psalmist feels for the moment that he would not have his enemies *slain*. If they were completely destroyed, the nation would forget the triumph of God. Rather let them be *shaken* and *brought down*, that their desperate state may be a permanent reminder of what God has done in the past and may do in the future.

This mood passes, and is succeeded by a longing for extreme vengeance. It would seem that the enemy had employed magic—*curses and spells*—against the psalmist; their *sin* lies in *the word of their lips* (vv. 12-13^a). With a lack of logic which seems strange to us, the psalm depicts the offenders as learning the universal supremacy of the *God* that *ruleth in Jacob* by their annihilation (v. 13^{b, c}).

Once more the first refrain recurs, and this time it is followed in v. 15 by a picture of the dogs' failure to get food enough for themselves. But the psalmist no longer dwells on them; it is his own deliverance that makes him *sing* and *exult at morn*, and leads him to a repetition of the second refrain, which, though mutilated, offers a fitting conclusion to the whole.

Religious Teaching

As so often in psalms of this type, we have the belief of the pure monotheist in the divine government of the world, and in the ultimate vindication of God and of his people. Like most of his fellows, the psalmist has not risen above the desire for vengeance; the world still had some centuries to wait before it heard the lesson, "Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you, pray for them that despitefully use you".

PSALM 60

ONCE again we have a powerful appeal for help against the enemies of the psalmist and of his people. Its form, as Gunkel has seen, is that of a brief "liturgy", beginning and ending with national complaints, while the central portion consists of a divine word, an "oracle". It is interesting to note that this oracle is arranged in three-member lines, while the rest has the normal two-member lines. The 3 : 3 : 3 is not infrequent as a regular variation of the 3 : 3 (see pp. 30 f.), but when it occurs in blocks, as it does here, it may be assumed that the poet intended to indicate some kind of special quality in the passage so composed. It is possible that this oracle is a quotation from a poem, otherwise lost, which described the triumphs of Yahweh, and it is certainly this part of the poem which has given rise to the historical note which stands at the head of the psalm. Perhaps the *Selah* which now stands at the end of *v.* 4 should be transferred to the following verse.

Like Ps. 57, Ps. 60 was used as a source by the compiler of Ps. 108, and *vv.* 6-12 are identical with 108⁶⁻¹³. There are a few very slight differences, but the text in both cases has been unusually well preserved. Unlike Ps. 57, however, Ps. 60 is a single whole, and suggests neither compilation (with the possible exception of the middle section) or mutilation.

As usual, the dating is very uncertain, and estimates range from David (following the heading) to the time of John Hyrcanus, or even Alexander Jannæus. It need not be said that both extremes are highly improbable; the metaphor in *v.* 3 suggests a reference to 2 Isaiah.

Metre: 3 : 3; *vv.* 6-8, 3 : 3 : 3. The last word of *v.* 9 counts as two verse-units.

Of the Precantor. On "The Anemone of witness". Miktam. David's. To instruct. When he fought with Aram Naharaim and Aram Zobah, and Joab returned and smote Edom in the Vale of Salt, twelve thousand men.

- | | | | |
|---|------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | (3). | O God ! thou hast spurned us and | thou hast been wrath with us—turn |
| | | broken us ; | back to us ! |
| 2 | (4). | Thou hast shaken the earth, rent it | |
| | | open ; | Oh ° heal ° its breaches for it tottereth. |

of *Sukkoth* are obscure. The explanation given, *e.g.*, by Gunkel, is that these districts were in the hands of a foreign power, while those mentioned in *v.* 7, Gilead, Manasseh, Ephraim, and Judah, were still under native Israelite government; the date suggested is immediately after 722 B.C. But there was no period in the history of Israel, till comparatively late post-exilic times, when such a situation was to be found. The whole of the country to the east of Jordan (as far south as the Dead Sea) was organized as an Assyrian province by Tiglath-pileser II in 732 B.C., ten years before the fall of Samaria. Further, *Shechem*, is certainly to be included in the *Manasseh-Ephraim* territory, and the *Vale of Sukkoth* (the Jabbok district) in *Gilead*. We can only suppose that the various expressions used are simply ways of claiming ownership and complete authority. God can do as he pleases, both with the land claimed as truly Israelite, and with those neighbouring districts which had been alternately slaves and masters to his people. It is to be noted that *Moab* and *Edom* are given a lower status; the thought of a *washpot* is that of a "vessel to dishonour", while to *cast the shoe* over a vassal was certainly a sign of contempt (cp. the illustrations cited by Gunkel *ad loc.*).

Strangely enough, the psalmist is not wholly reassured by the oracle. He is emboldened to continue his prayer, but the form of his petition, with its longing for a *strong city* and its desire to be led *even unto Edom*—not merely power to resist an assault, but also ability to conquer an enemy is implied—suggests hope rather than confidence. The past is not so easily forgotten. After all, *God* has *spurned* his people and refused to *go forth in its hosts*. The battle-panic has fallen upon Israel, not on their foes, and the only possible explanation is the absence of God from the ranks. But, if only God will *give help against the adversary*—and none but God can—then all things will be possible, and the *feats of valour* performed through divine strength would win complete and overwhelming victory.

Religious Teaching

The psalm expresses the familiar conviction that all suffering, national or individual, must be traced to the divine anger. Here we find no attempt to discover the reason for God's displeasure; there is no confession of sin, no request for information as to the root of the trouble, no enquiry as to the measures which must be adopted to recover the divine favour. The psalmist simply appeals for a change in God's attitude, which will result in a happy reversal of fortune.

expression for safety, out of the reach of harm (cp. Ps. 18²). As he had been led away captive, so he now pleads : *lead thou me* ; for God alone is his *refuge* and protection *from the enemy* ; his *strong tower*. 4, 5. The thought of God as his refuge recalls to his mind the place of the divine presence, *thy tabernacle*, as he calls the temple, using the ancient term (cp. Ps. 27⁵) of the place whither men went to seek Yahweh (see Exod. 33⁷). And he longs that he might ever sojourn there, and *hide in the shadow of thy wings* (cp. Pss. 17⁸, 63⁷). It was here that *vows* were made, and the *desires* granted to those who *feared the name* of God, and such vows the psalmist now makes in the certain hope that God will grant his desire. 6, 7. The abruptness of the change of subject which follows, namely the prayer for the *king*, has induced some commentators to regard these verses as out of place. We believe this to be a mistake ; when it is remembered how close an association was believed to exist between God and the king (see on this, pp. 250, 253), it will be realized that the mention of the king after the prayer offered to God is quite appropriate. The prayer for the length of the king's life is in the Oriental manner of speech (cp. Ps. 18⁵⁰). But prayer is also made that his rule may be *in the presence of God, i.e.*, in accordance with divine guidance, and that *mercy and truth*, apportioned to him by God, may preserve him. Such thoughts bring comfort to the exile's heart, and he concludes (8) in a happier vein : *So will I sing praise to thy name for evermore, and daily perform my vows* ; he is thinking of the time when God will lead him home again.

Religious Teaching

The central point in the religious teaching of this psalm is the longing for God's presence in the sanctuary, from which the exile is cut off ; this will come before us again in considering the religious teaching of Ps. 63. Another element in the religious teaching of the psalm is the prayer for the king. That in the early days certain conceptions regarding kingship were of an unedifying and superstitious nature there is no denying ; but to the devout Israelite what was of paramount importance was that the king was the anointed one of God. A ruler, in other words, was such because it was, in accordance with the divine will, for the benefit of men that they should be governed and led by one superior to the generality. However much, in the history of nations, kingship may have been degraded through human folly and wickedness, there is an underlying principle contained in the essence of rulership which is of the deepest significance and importance : unless men have somebody to look up to who is superior, in some respect, to themselves, they are in danger of becoming little demi-gods—a pitiable spectacle ! The king himself recognizes God, else were he not fit to be a king.

and the words which follow bear this out; political strife is never characterized by what is expressed by the fine French proverb *Noblesse oblige*; so that we can understand the psalmist's words of disgust: *They delight in lying, with their mouth they bless, but in their heart they curse*; in plain language, they are base hypocrites. With the repetition in 5, 6 of the opening verses we have already dealt. As they are in the nature of a self-communing, their position here breaks the sequence of thought. The action and the character of the psalmist's enemies, and his consequent peril, have been described in vv. 3, 4, so that it follows logically when, in contrast to this, he goes on to say: *With God is my salvation and my glory, the Rock of my strength, my refuge is in God*; for, as the sequel shows, the outcome of the strife was favourable to him. 8. But as leader of a party, he thinks also of his followers, and has words of cheer and comfort for them: *Trust in him at all times, O ye people . . . God is a refuge for us*. 9. The adversaries, he goes on to say, whether gathered from the common people, *they of low degree*, or from the more influential classes, *they of high degree*, are alike contemptible; in the one case they are unreliable, *vanity*, lit. "a breath", in the other they are *deception*, lit. "a lie". They are compared with *balances*, the scale in which they are weighed *goes up* (cp. Job 31⁶, Dan. 5²⁷). 10. The psalmist then adjures his followers, holding up the adversaries as a warning, *not to trust in oppression*, or unrighteous gain, nor to base *false hope* on what is gained by *robbery*; *wealth*, in any case, is not to be relied upon (cp. Ps. 49⁶). 11. The final words are, once more, the recognition of God's *power* and *love (hesed)*; in the present circumstances the former has been exhibited in the downfall of the adversaries, the latter in the deliverance of the psalmist and his followers from danger. Very significantly does he add: *For thou dost recompense a man according to his work*; the adversaries, God's enemies, have been discomfited; but he stands firm through his trust in God, repeatedly expressed in the psalm.

Religious Teaching

Common to most of the psalms is the faith and trust in God which is so prominent here; but in this psalm this religious element is brought into connexion with political strife; a very noteworthy fact. In politics, and it has been the same through the history of all ages, unfair utterances and unscrupulous dealings are normal tools; it was so in the psalmist's day. But what a revolution in the conduct and solution of political differences would be brought about if politicians recognized the truth that from no sphere of human activity is the eye of the Almighty withdrawn!

PSALM 63

THE psalm of an exile. In words of intense earnestness the psalmist expresses his ardent yearning for the presence of God. He thinks, first, of the time when in the sanctuary he had worshipped God, and, as he believed, had beheld him (on this see the exegetical note). But he has learned in exile that the divine presence is not restricted either to place or time.

That an exile in Babylon should have his enemies is in the nature of things; but these enemies are of a very different order from those spoken of in many other psalms.

The king referred to can only be Jehoiachin, the psalmist's fellow-exile.

With the view taken by some commentators that the verses of the psalm are out of order because of a supposed want of logical connexion, we must confess entire disagreement. Such a view we believe to be due to the failure to grasp the position, and above all, the religious spirit of the psalmist.

The date is early exilic.

The metre is, with one or two exceptions, 3 : 3.

1. *A Psalm. David's. When he was in wilderness of Judah.*

- 1 (2). ° Yahweh ° my God, ° I seek thee ; my soul thirsteth for thee,
My flesh longeth for thee in a dry land ° where no water is ;
- 2 (3). Even as when in the sanctuary I and saw thy might and thy majesty ;
beheld thee, my lips shall praise thee ;
- 3 (4). For better than life is thy love ;
- 4 (5). Yea, I will bless thee as long as I in thy name will I lift up my hands ;
live,
- 5 (6). As with fat and marrow
my soul thou dost satisfy
° With joyful lips °
my mouth shall sing praise.
- 6 (7). When I call thee to mind upon my in the night-watches I meditate on
bed, thee ;
- 7 (8). For thou hast been my help, and in the shadow of thy wings I am
happy.
- 8 (9). My soul cleaveth unto thee, ° thy right-hand doth uphold me.
- 9 (10). But they that seek after my life ° shall go into the lowest parts of the
earth ;
- 10 (11). ° They shall be delivered ° ° over
to the power of the sword °, they shall be a portion for jackals.
- 11 (12). But the king shall rejoice in every one that sweareth by him shall
° Yahweh °, glory,
But the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.

Text-critical Notes

1. Read יְהוָה for אֱלֹהִים, "God". Om. אֱלֹהִים. Om. וְעָנִי, "and weary", for the rhythm's sake. 5. Lit. "with lips of joyful-shoutings"; read ק for ו, "and". 9. Lit. "soul"; om. לְשׂוֹאָה, "to destroy it", marg. gloss which disturbs the rhythm. 10. Read, with GS, יִצְרֵהוּ for יִצְרֵהוּ, "they shall deliver him". Lit. "on to the hands of the sword". 11. Read יְהוָה for אֱלֹהִים.

Title. This was doubtless suggested by the words of *v. 1*, *in a dry land where no water is*, and was added in reference to the narrative in 2 Sam. 17 about David's flight from Absalom.

1. The psalmist, writing apparently in exile, yearns for the presence of Yahweh; according to the belief of the times, Yahweh's presence was in the Holy Land, where alone he could be worshipped, see 2 Kgs. 5¹⁷. His whole being, *soul* and *body*, is athirst and longing for God, so deep is his love for him (cp. Ps. 42¹). 2. He then recalls the time when *in the sanctuary* at Jerusalem he *had beheld* God, and had seen his *might* and *majesty*. An interesting question is raised if it be asked how we are to understand the psalmist's words about beholding God in the sanctuary, and seeing his might and majesty; this cannot be explained away by saying that "this beholding of Yahweh in his temple was in oral worship" (Briggs, *in loc.*). When one reads such passages as Num. 10^{35, 36}, 1 Sam. 4³⁻⁸, it is clear that the divine presence was conceived of as connected with some concrete object. The commandment, "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image", bears this out. Our psalm belongs to the early exilic period, before more spiritual conceptions regarding the divine presence had as yet been apprehended by the bulk of the exiles (see Ezek. 14¹⁻¹¹, Isa. 44^{9^a}); and there can be no doubt that the Exile was one of the most potent means of helping faithful worshippers of Yahweh to conceive of him in a more spiritual way. 3-5. This is illustrated very pointedly in the person of our psalmist, who, though far from the homeland and from Yahweh's sanctuary, realizes that his *love is better than life* itself; and most significant, as pointing to his realization of Yahweh's spiritual presence are the reiterated expressions of his worship: *my lips shall praise thee; I will bless thee as long as I live; in thy name will I lift up my hands*. And he recalls again the time when he worshipped in the temple and partook of the sacrificial feasts; just as he was then *satisfied with fat and marrow*, so now is he filled with happiness in his spiritual worship: *with joyful lips my mouth shall sing praise*. 6-8. Then he gives a very touching picture of his intimate communing with God; lying awake at nights he thinks of how he has been helped and protected by God in the land of exile: *in the night-watches I meditate on thee; for thou hast been my help, and in the shadow of thy wings I am happy*; and he expresses his love for his divine Protector, *my soul cleaveth unto thee*, for he has experienced his protection, *thy right-hand doth uphold me*. 9, 10. And though enemies are around him, he does not fear, for they *shall go into the lowest parts of the earth, i.e., Sheol*, and *be delivered over to the power of the sword, i.e.,* their foes will overcome them, contemptible though those foes are; he calls them by the opprobrious name of *jackals* (cp. Lam. 5¹⁸). 11. His last thought is of *the king, i.e., Jehoiachin*, his fellow-exile (2 Kgs. 24¹⁵); he looks forward to his release, though that did not take place until long

after (2 Kgs. 25²⁷⁻³⁰). What is referred to in the words, *for the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped*, it is impossible to say ; but evidently some episode was in the mind of the psalmist of which our records make no mention.

Religious Teaching

The earnest yearning for God, and the insight into communion with him on the part of a truly good man, as these are set forth in this psalm, are unrivalled in the Psalter. From one who had been cut off from the loved and familiar scenes of worship in his native land, and was now condemned to live in exile, these expressions of love for God, these words of heartfelt communing with him, have a reality and sincerity which are intensely touching. A friend of the present writer, whose duties had called him away into a somewhat wild part of Australia, said : " I never knew what yearning for worship meant until circumstances prevented me for months from kneeling at God's altar ". Then, another thing which the psalm teaches is the feeling of care-less (*ἀμέριμνος*) security engendered by the conviction of God's nearness ; the psalmist expresses it in words of inimitable beauty : " In the shadow of thy wings I am happy ". It is not given to all to have such faith ; but even to hear of it is an inspiration, and an incentive to draw nearer to God.

PSALM 64

THIS outpouring of one who is the victim of cruel enemies is similar in content to a number of other psalms. In this case the action of the psalmist's foes is confined to malicious slander ; there is no mention of personal violence as in some other psalms of similar character. The cause of the feeling against the psalmist is not indicated ; but it was doubtless the same as that which prompted animosity against the *Hasidim*, described in many other psalms ; on the whole subject see pp. 56 ff.

Short as the psalm is, the text has suffered considerable corruption.

The metre varies, due in part to textual corruption.

The subject-matter points to a post-exilic date.

1. *For the Precentor : A Psalm. David's.*
- 1 (2). Hear, O God,
my voice in my complaint ;
From the terror of the enemy
preserve my life.
- 2 (3). Hide me from the secret-counsel of the wicked, from the tumult of the workers of iniquity,
- 3 (4). Who whet their tongue like a sword, who " sharpen like arrows," bitter words,
- 4 (5). To shoot in secret places at the innocent, suddenly do they shoot, when they are not " seen ".

- 5 (6). ° They strengthen themselves ° in
 an evil purpose, ° they dig ° that they may hide snares ;
 They say : " Who will see ° us ° ? "
- 6 (7). ° And ° may God shoot them with
 an arrow, suddenly may they be wounded ;
- 8 (9). ° And may he cause them to
 stumble because of ° their so that all who see them wag (their
 tongue, heads).
- 9 (10). Then shall all men fear, and recognize the work of God,
 Yea, they will realize that it is his work.
- 10 (11). Let the righteous rejoice in and let all the upright in heart glory.
 Yahweh °,

Text-critical Notes

3. Read, with Graetz and Gunkel, ^{וַיִּרְאוּ} for ^{וַיִּרְאוּ} for ^{וַיִּרְאוּ}, " they bend (lit. tread) their arrow ". 4. Read, with S, ^{וַיִּירָאוּ} for ^{וַיִּירָאוּ}, " fear ". 5. Read ^{וַיִּתְּנוּ} for ^{וַיִּתְּנוּ} for ^{וַיִּתְּנוּ}, " they make strong to themselves ". Read ^{וַיִּתְּנוּ} for ^{וַיִּתְּנוּ}, " they recount ". Read, with SV, ^{לָהֶם} for ^{לָהֶם}, " them ". 6. The text of this verse is very corrupt. Various drastic emendations are proposed, but they do not inspire confidence. 7. Read, with the Versions, ^{וַיִּתְּנוּ} for ^{וַיִּתְּנוּ}. 8. Read ^{וַיִּתְּנוּ} for ^{וַיִּתְּנוּ}, " and they caused him to stumble because of them ". 10. Om. ^{וַיִּתְּנוּ}, " and trust in him ", a marg. gloss which breaks the rhythm.

1. The psalmist pleads with God to hearken unto his *complaint*, and to *preserve his life from the terror of the enemy*, used collectively. This reads as though his life were endangered ; but in what follows, there is not necessarily any reference to physical violence being offered, so that the prayer that his life may be preserved is probably meant figuratively, as much else in the psalm. 2-5. The psalmist then proceeds to describe these enemies and their methods of proceeding. They are spoken of as *the wicked* and as *workers of iniquity* ; in figurative language they are said to *whet their tongue like a sword* (cp. Pss. 55²¹, 57⁴), and to *sharpen their bitter words like arrows* (cp. Pss. 7^{12, 13}, 11²) ; they mature their plans in secret, and their attacks on *the innocent* are made *suddenly* from unexpected quarters, *secret places* (cp. Ps. 10⁸), where *they are not seen* (cp. Ps. 10⁸⁻¹⁰). The evil design on which they are engaged is relentlessly pursued, and they are figuratively described as *digging snares* which are *hidden*, so that their nefarious purpose is carried out secretly : *Who will see us ?* they say. It is thus evident that the reference here is to secret intrigues schemed and developed with persistent and unscrupulous activity ; the warfare is one of underhand slander in which the defamers take good care to remain in the background. That this should be undertaken by a number of evil-disposed men against a single individual suggests that the psalmist was one who occupied a position of influence. Since no indication is given as to who the enemies are and why they have taken this action, it is clear that both were matters of common knowledge. It can, therefore, hardly be doubted that the psalm reflects the political-religious strife which persisted intermittently through various periods of Jewish history. For the details of this

see pp. 56 ff. The text of the verse which follows (6) is very corrupt; various emendations are suggested, but each presents difficulties; we have, therefore, been constrained to leave it blank. 7-9. These distasteful verses exhibit a spirit of extreme bitterness; they are probably what may be described as a retributive curse, the mere utterance of which was believed to be effective; the evil designed against others rebounds back on the heads of those who conceived it.

A pleasanter note is struck in the concluding verse (10) where, in contrast to the fate called down upon the wicked slanderers, *the righteous* are bidden to *rejoice in Yahweh*, and the *heart of the upright to glory, i.e., exult in themselves*.

For this psalm a section on religious teaching is not called for.

PSALM 65

THIS psalm consists of two parts: *vv.* 1-8 and *vv.* 9-13. The former is a hymn of praise and gratitude to God for his lovingkindness and power, sung by the whole body of worshippers. First, a recognition of the duty of worship, followed by some striking words expressive of the sense of sinfulness. The blessedness of those who enter the house of God is then emphasized; and this part concludes with the contemplation of God's power. The second part is a thankful recognition of God's mercy in having given the autumn rains, so needful for the fruitfulness of the soil; the very pastures are poetically described as shouting in praise to God; spring-time has now come, and the country is clothed with beauty.

It may well be that we have here the joining together of two psalms, the purpose being to illustrate the seemliness of giving praise to God (1-8) by describing the beauty of the earth of his creation (9-13).

The Hebrew is in parts difficult to give in a translation, and some paraphrase is unavoidable.

The date of the first part is post-exilic; but the second part may well be pre-exilic.

The metre in the first part is 3 : 2; in the second it varies between 3 : 3 and 2 : 2.

1. *For the Precentor : A Psalm. David's. A Song.*

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 (2). Unto thee praise is ° seemly °,
Unto thee vows are fulfilled, | O God, in Zion, |
| Unto thee doth all flesh ° bring ° | 2 (3). O thou that hearkenest unto
prayer. |
| Our transgressions ° overwhelm
us °, | 3 (4). ° that which concerneth ° iniqui-
ties ; |
| | thou dost cover them over. |

- 4 (5). Blessed is he whom thou choosest
and ° acceptest °
° We will delight ourselves ° with
the goodness of thy house,
5 (6). By awe-inspiring deeds dost thou
answer in righteousness,
Thou that art the confidence of all
the ends of the earth
6 (7). Who setteth fast the mountains by
his strength,
7 (8). Who stilleth the roaring of the seas,
8 (9). They that dwell in the uttermost
parts are afraid
The outgoing of morning and evening thou makest to rejoice.
9 (10). Thou hast visited the earth, and
watered it,
The brook of God
is full of water,
Thou preparest ° the corn thereof °,
Yea, thus thou preparest it :
10 (11). Watering the furrows thereof,
levelling the ridges thereof ;
Thou makest it soft with showers,
Thou blessest the growth thereof.
11 (12). Thou crownest the year of thy
goodness,
12 (13). The pastures of the steppe-land
° shout for joy °
13 (14). The fields are ° covered ° with
flocks,
and thy waggons drip with fatness ;
the hills are girded with gladness ;
and the valleys are ° full ° of corn ;
They shout for joy, yea, they sing.

Text-critical Notes

1. Read, with the Versions, דְּמִיָּה (from דָּמָה "to be like", in the extended sense of "to be fitting"; in the Talmud, *Abod. Zar.* 38^b, it is used in the sense of "to be right") for דְּמִיָּה, "quietude" or "silence". 2. Read יָבִיאוּ for יָבִיאוּ, "come". 3. Lit. "the matters of". Lit. "are too strong for us"; read, with G, מִלִּי for מִלִּי, "for me". 4. Lit. "causest to come near". Lit. "we will be satisfied". Read קִוֵּשׁ for קוֹדֵשׁ. 5. Read אֵיִם for יָם, "sea" (יָם/יָם). 7. Om. לְאֵמִים, "and the tumult of the peoples", a marg. gloss which disturbs the metre. 9. Read, with S, דְּגָנָם for דְּגָנָם, "their corn". 12. Read, with Gunkel, יִרְעֵוּ for יִרְעֵוּ, "they drip". 13. Lit. "clothed". Lit. "enveloped".

1-3. There is a difficulty about these opening verses because three subjects are pointedly mentioned, and one does not see what connexion there is between them: praise, fulfilling vows, grievous sin; and one wonders what it is all about. Evidently, therefore, some occurrence was in the psalmist's mind; and it was clearly something of common knowledge. Failing definite indication, we must suppose that the people had been guilty of some act of transgression, of which they had repented and for which atonement was made by vowing offerings to God. With the burden of sin thus removed, they come to the house of God to sing his praise. Hence the beginning of the psalm: *Unto thee praise is seemly, O God, in Zion*; "seemly" is perhaps not strong enough, the thought is that praise to God is demanded; for he has *hearkened unto prayer*, for forgiveness, as the context shows; and this is granted be-

cause the *vows* which had been made *are fulfilled*, *i.e.*, the sacrifices have been offered. Some striking words follow: *Unto thee doth all flesh bring that which concerneth iniquities*; the meaning is that sinful humanity ("all flesh") must make confession to God of iniquities committed, whereby the heart is disburdened; and if, as will sometimes happen, there have been very grave *transgressions*, plunging the sinner into despair, then he must throw himself upon the mercy of God, who will *cover them over*, *i.e.*, take them away, and forgive. The Hebrew word rendered "cover over" (the root is *kpr*) is a difficult one, but, in the words of Robertson Smith, "there are Semitic analogies for regarding the forgiveness of sin either as 'covering' or as 'wiping out' . . . the most important point is that, except in the Priest's Code, it is God, not the priest, who (on the one etymology) wipes out sin, or (on the other) regards it as covered".¹ The psalmist thus records that the worshippers have been guilty of grievous sin, that they have repented and fulfilled their vows, and that therefore they have been forgiven. This being so, he continues with sanctified joy (4): *Blessed is he whom thou choosest and acceptest, that they may dwell in thy courts*; disburdened of their sin, the worshippers can *delight* themselves *with the goodness of thy house*, *i.e.*, the blessings of forgiveness and divine favour which have been granted; the *holiness* of the *sanctuary* is imparted to those who enter there with pure hearts. 5-8. Praise to God is then fitly offered. All that God does is done in righteousness; awe-inspiring deeds witness to his power, so that not only have his own people trust in him, but he is *the confidence of all the ends of the earth*, a universalistic note which is very striking. The awe-inspiring deeds are then recorded: the act of creation in *setting fast the mountains by his strength*, which, on account of their immoveable firmness, are described as *girded about with might*; then the great power of him *who stilleth the roaring of the seas, and of their waves*, with the thought, no doubt, of the primeval combat (see notes on Ps. 89^{9,10}). Such manifestations of power cause them *that dwell in the uttermost parts*, *i.e.*, of the earth, to be *afraid*, *i.e.*, awe-struck; the uttermost parts are further described as *the outgoing of morning and evening*, *i.e.*, east and west (cp. Ps. 75⁶), which are personified; they, too, are made *to rejoice* (cp. Ps. 98³, "all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God").

9-13. In these verses we have a self-contained and beautiful hymn of gratitude for a bounteous harvest. In the spring God had *visited the earth, and watered it* with plentiful rain, thereby *enriching it*, *i.e.*, making it fruitful; hence the prosperous year which the psalmist looks back upon with thankful heart. The old-world idea of *the brook, or river, of God* (cp. Gen. 1⁷, Job 38²⁵) finds mention here; the belief was that God had a river in the heavenly spheres, ever full of water, from which he

¹ *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, p. 381, note 1 (1895).

dispensed rain for the earth. Thereby the earth was made fruitful: *thou preparest the corn thereof*, i.e., of the earth, not "their corn", as though the reference were to the corn of the people, the psalmist has not got them in mind; he then goes on to describe how God *prepares* the earth for bearing corn: *watering the furrows* (perhaps this should be rendered "clods") *thereof*, and, by means of the rain, *levelling* uneven patches; thus the showers soften the soil so that the sown grain may sprout: *thou blessest the growth thereof*. It is a happy picture which the psalmist brings before his mind's eye; so that he speaks of the prosperous year as one of God's goodness, which he has "crowned"; a poetic way of expressing what we should call a record year. The very waggons, the psalmist calls them *thy waggons* because they carry God's gift of corn, *drip with fatness*; but at the back of his mind there may have been another old-world idea that God went through the land leaving marks of fruitfulness wherever he went. Nature is again personified, so that it is said that *the pastures of the steppe-land shout for joy, and the hills are girded with gladness*, i.e., they wear gladness as an ornament of clothing; *the fields being covered with flocks, and the valleys full of corn*, likewise *shout for joy, yea, they sing*. It is a delightful picture of whole-hearted happiness, in which the psalmist, cradled in the lap of surrounding beauty, expresses the outcome of what he began by saying: *thou hast visited the earth*.

Religious Teaching

This has necessarily been brought out in what has already been said; but we may briefly recapitulate the main points; and it is especially noteworthy that these are presented as normal among all professing believers in God. There is, first of all, the thought that it is not only a duty, but a *privilege*, to enter the house of God and to worship him. Then there is the conviction that God answers prayer, and especially when the evidence of repentance for sin is shown forth. This is followed by the further teaching that where there is repentance, there is also forgiveness. It is also well worth emphasizing that the forgiven sinner is encouraged to rejoice. The knowledge of being brought nearer to God through his forgiveness must generate happiness and strengthen the resolution to fight against all that displeases him.

END OF VOL. I.